Problems of Communism

NUMBER 3 VOL. V
MAY–JUNE 1956

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Outside the United States, *Problems of Communism* may be obtained from the nearest office of the United States Information Service. For sale within the United States by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price 35 cents (single copy). Subscription price $1.50 a year. Back issues of Vol. I (1952) and Vol. II (1953) and some issues of Vol. III (1954) are not available.

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The Party Above All

BEFORE attempting to assess the significance of the current onslaught on Stalin it is worthwhile to pause and survey the relevant information made public by Soviet and satellite sources to date. The first thing that emerges from them is that the denigration of Stalin, however startling in its revelations, is nevertheless following a consistent and logical pattern. *Pravda* of March 28 laid down the line which all other papers—Soviet and satellite alike—faithfully adhere to. "One of the strongest Marxists," is *Pravda*'s unconsciously ironic tribute to its one-time idol. There is no question of his invaluable contribution to the growth and consolidation of the Soviet state, particularly in its first decade. In the 1930's, however, "certain features and qualities began gradually to appear in Stalin's practice of leadership, which later developed into the cult of the individual." *Pravda* describes them, succinctly, as "lack of personal modesty," but it is the Polish press and radio which—while basically taking the cue from Moscow—fill in the gruesome details:

> **How monstrous and pathologically suspicious must have been the thoughts of a man who could suppose that numerous members of the Central Committee were enemies or imperialist agents. And it was Stalin himself who approved the lists of members of the Central Committee to be arrested! (Radio Warsaw, March 29).**

And with a gusto that may come from a genuine sense of relief, Jerzy Morawski, one of the secretaries of the Polish party, elaborates:

> **. . . the security organs [in the USSR and "People's Democracies"] became independent of the party authorities and were utilized to consolidate the personal power of Stalin over the party. In this situation, many honest activists who opposed Stalin in various matters fell victim to repression. Methods of provocation were used; false accusations were forged; abuses took place during investigations in order to bring about the condemnation of the accused. As a result, many honest people were imprisoned, sent to penal camps, or shot. (*Trybuna Ludu,* Warsaw, March 28).**

The list of accusations is long and repetitive. *Rude Pravo* (Prague) of April 11 speaks of "exaggerated centralism . . . suppression of the initiative of workers . . . . The principle of collective leadership was not implemented, and inner-party democracy was violated." *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia) of April 9 calls for a "purge" of the arts and sciences which embody "views linked with the cult of the individual." A. Novotny, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak CP, after denouncing the "cult" for having "seriously arrested the development of Soviet society," demands an end to the practice of "exhibiting the busts of living persons or naming individual factories, streets, and schools after living persons . . . . This is a glaring example of flattery and sycophancy," he concludes, with the air of one who has just made an earth-shaking discovery (*Rude Pravo,* April 10). *Pravda* (March 28) attacks "unjustified repressions" which were injurious to "economic management . . . Serious mistakes were made in guiding agriculture . . . as a result of which a number of its important branches found themselves in a state of neglect . . ." And so on and on, *ad infinitum.*

There is no doubt, as the above quotations demonstrate, that the most extensive process of public "self-criticism" in the history of communism is now in progress; and it would be as absurd to negate its existence as to deny its potentially beneficial effect on the further evolution of the Soviet system. Yet by the same token it would be utterly wrong to term it—as some commentators have—a "complete" break with the Stalinist past. It would, indeed, appear at times as if Communist leaders are vying with each other in their efforts to expose the dark and bloody pages of their collective past. But these efforts have one common denominator: they are calculated, carefully delineated, and cautiously balanced.

THE limits—as well as the *raison d'être*—of the break with Stalinism emerge not only from denunciations, but also affirmations, not only from what is said, but from what is left *unsaid.* Rajk and Kostov are "rehabilitated," but "Trotskyites" and "Bukharinites" continue to receive their customary share of abuse. Czechoslovakia releases several prisoners, but places the blame for the "violation of socialist laws" on no other than Rudolf Slansky, himself a victim of one of the most macabre show trials in

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the history of communism. The Soviets admit having waged a virulent anti-Semitic campaign in 1948–49, resulting in the wholesale slaughter of virtually all Jewish literati in the USSR, yet not a word is said about the case of the internationally known labor leaders Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, who had been arrested in 1939 as "British spies," only to be executed, in 1942, on grounds of "pro-German" activity. The April issue of *Problems of History* exhorts Soviet historians to revise their methods of historical research, but *Pravda* of April 5 still labels Stalin's ideological opponents as "advocates of the restoration of capitalism."

More important than that, the "new line," whatever its merits, signifies no fundamental break with the *policies* and *system* of the past. Overwhelming emphasis on heavy industry and neglect of the consumer still constitute the *sine qua non* of Soviet economic planning. The peasants are still forced to toil for the state, rather than for themselves, even though their burden has been lessened somewhat. The worker continues to be bound to his place of work, deprived of his right to choose or change his job as he sees fit, forbidden to strike for higher pay and better working conditions. And the party continues to reaffirm its supremacy, its "leading role," and its complete domination over all areas of public life.

IT IS perhaps this last point that needs to be stressed above all others, for herein lies the answer to how extensive the changes, and how far the leadership is willing to project them. A careful reading of the Soviet and satellite press for the past few months will show conclusively that the *raison d'être* of the new policy is *the facilitation and—in effect—the strengthening of the rule of the party over the rest of the population.* In the last years of Stalin's life, the party—even its highest organs—ceased to function as an autonomous and efficient body directing and controlling all forces in Soviet society, and gave way (as Soviet sources unceasingly emphasize) to the personal and tyrannical reign of the *Vozhd.* There is little doubt that it had come to a point where even the most powerful party leaders were continuously in fear of their lives. With Stalin's death, his successors embarked upon a course that was to preserve their personal safety, to forestall the rise of another single dictator, and to insure their *collective dictatorship* over the rest of society. Party members who had fallen victim to the "pathological" whims of an absolute leader are "rehabilitated"; of the injustices perpetrated on *non-party* people—individually or *en masse*—there is no word. Party *activists* are told they may display more initiative and assertiveness in the implementation of basic party policies—without perpetual fear and thwarting suspicion. Stalin is dethroned, and in his place Lenin is portrayed as the fountain of all ideological wisdom. It is the party, and only the party, that is now credited with the sundry achievements of communism. "The correctness of the policy of the Communist Party, its fidelity to the great banner of Marxism-Leninism, are the sources of all our successes," proclaims *Pravda* of April 5. The party will not again allow blood-baths within the *avant garde* of the proletariat; history will not be written for the glorification of a single individual; irrational and dangerous "centralism" must be eliminated, yet basic devotion to the party must remain intact. As the worker V. Gorokhov, speaking at a meeting in his plant, is triumphantly quoted:

I wish to state from the bottom of my heart: Listen, our dear party! You are our pride, our glory, and our hope! Under your tried and tested leadership we will advance toward the radiant Communist future. We assure you that we will dedicate all our energies to the further advancement of the might and well-being of our country! (*Pravda,* April 5).

The party desires a change, greater flexibility, an end to tensions that lie, like a heavy and enormous burden, in the way of its advance toward "the radiant Communist future." At the same time, there must be a limit to "criticism and self-criticism," an end to the activity of "rotten elements that are trying to question . . . the party's policy." With his usual bluntness, Khrushchev thus stated this theme:

While criticizing shortcomings and errors . . . we must primarily see to it that this criticism strengthens the Soviet system, and helps us to advance still more swiftly and successfully toward our great goal—communism. The enemies hope that we shall slacken our vigilance, that we shall weaken our organs of state security. No, this will never come to pass! The proletarian sword must always be sharp, must always protect the conquests of the revolution, the conquests of the working class, the conquests of the toiling masses (*Pravda,* April 13).

It is only prudent to conclude that as long as Soviet Russia remains a totalitarian country, as long as democracy is non-existent and the fate of the citizen lies in the hands of the self-anointed leaders of the "toiling masses," the "proletarian sword" will indeed remain "sharp," and never be allowed to rust in peace.

A. B.

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The Twentieth Congress and After

Editors' Note: The following three articles are the first in a series of commentaries on developments in the USSR since the 20th Congress of the CPSU, held in Moscow last February. In the first article, Merle Fainsod reports on the most important aspects of the Congress: the Stalin denigration, the innovations in ideology, and the main outlines of the domestic and foreign policies as they emerged from the Congress sessions. The second article, by Hugh Seton-Watson, examines the class structure of Soviet society and shows its relation to several developments at the Congress. Finally, Marshall D. Shulman seeks to answer the fundamental question plaguing Soviet experts and laymen alike: Is the Soviet Union changing, and if so, in what direction?

The CPSU Takes Stock of Itself

By MERLE FAINSOD

THE 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, held in Moscow in February, bore striking resemblance in its procedure to earlier convocations of the Stalin era. It was, like its predecessors, a congress without debate and without opposition. All decisions were taken by unanimous vote, and most of the speakers conveyed the impression of actors reciting their assigned scripts in accordance with cues provided by the report of the Central Committee. It is safe to say that Stalin would have approved of the stage management, if not the content of the performance.

For this time Stalin was the villain of the piece. The most dramatic highlight of the Congress was the *coup de grâce* administered to the Stalin cult. Yet the motivations for this action still remain obscure. The denigration of Stalin was well under way long before the Congress assembled. Indeed, it may be said to have begun with the funeral orations delivered over Stalin's bier. There were signs of still sharper down grading when the Soviet press passed his birthday on December 21, 1953 without even a formal acknowledgment. A year later, however, he was partially restored to grace. On December 21, 1954 *Pravda* hailed his achievements as the ' great continuer of the cause of V. I. Lenin"; no word of criticism was permitted to mar its paean of praise. As late as the anniversary meeting of the Moscow Soviet on November 6, 1955, the portraits of Lenin and Stalin appeared side by side in equal size; the grand succession of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin was reproclaimed; and Kaganovich paid tribute to "the great Stalin." The 76th anniversary of his birth on December 21, 1955, elicited the customary press tribute.

It is against this background that one begins to sense the shock which the 20th Congress' attack on Stalin must have evoked. It may even be supposed that there were differences of view within the leadership group itself on the dimensions and timing of the assault; indeed Kaganovich implied as much in his admission to the Congress that the decision to embark on a struggle against the cult of the individual was "no easy question."

Mr. Fainsod is Professor of Government at Harvard University and author of *How Russia is Ruled* (Harvard University Press, 1953). His most recent contribution to this magazine was "Censorship in the USSR—A Documented Record," in issue No. 2, Vol. V (March–April 1956).

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The Charges

The treatment of Stalin at the Congress followed a curious course. The first sign of the limbo to which Stalin was being consigned came in the opening moments of the Congress when the delegates rose to observe a moment of silence to honor the memory of "several prominent leaders of the Communist movement" who had died since the last Congress. The "prominent leaders" were Stalin, Gottwald, and the Japanese Communist Kyuichi Tokuda!

The denigration of Stalin was handled rather cautiously in Khrushchev's report on behalf of the Central Committee. Aside from a strong condemnation of the leader cult, which, Khrushchev declared, "at times resulted in serious drawbacks in our work," Stalin was ignored rather than openly condemned. Khrushchev mentioned his name only once in the course of a 50,000-word address, and then only to note that "shortly after the 19th Congress, death took Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin from our ranks." [1]

It remained for Mikoyan to launch the first open attack. At the 19th Congress he had hailed Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* as a work of genius, a treasure house of Communist inspiration. Now he commented, "It is doubtful that we can be helped by it, and it is doubtful if it is correct. . . ." [2] He sharply criticized Stalin's *Short Course on the History of the Party* and demanded new textbooks to replace it. He called for the rehabilitation of a number of Old Bolsheviks such as Kossior and Antonov-Ovseyenko who were liquidated by Stalin in the Great Purge and "wrongly declared enemies of the people." He referred obliquely but with unmistakable sarcasm to Stalin's famous "Oath to Lenin" and also to the passages in Lenin's last testament denouncing Stalin as "too rude" and calling for his removal as General Secretary of the party. Said Mikoyan:

Lenin's great anxiety about the fate of our party and our revolution before he left us is well-known. . . . How great would be Lenin's joy if he saw now . . . that we not only swear by Lenin's name but are exerting our efforts to put into practice Lenin's ideas . . . [3]

The Congress concluded with a sensational, though as yet unpublished, speech by Khrushchev in which Stalin was pictured as a vengeful tyrant who trusted no one, murdered and terrorized his closest associates, and was primarily responsible for the near defeat of the Soviet Union in the early years of World War II. The more or less authoritative accounts of this speech which have appeared in the Yugoslav and satellite press make clear, however, that the indictment was not a total one.[4] Stalin's services during the Revolution and Civil War, his struggles against the Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and bourgeois nationalists, and his contributions to industrialization and collectivization received some recognition. The brunt of the attack was apparently centered on developments after the 17th Party Congress in 1934 when the cult of Stalin worship gathered full momentum and the collective character of the party leadership was allegedly dissolved.

The bill of particulars against Stalin included the murder of thousands of honest, innocent Communists during the Great Purge; the weakening of the Red Army as the result of the liquidation of Tukhachevsky and other high-ranking officers on the basis of slanderous and unjustified charges; Stalin's failure to take necessary defensive measures against the Nazi attack; his inept interference with the Red Army High Command during the war; his incorrect attitude toward the question of nationalities; his provocation in the case of Yugoslavia; his fabrication of the so-called "Leningrad Case" in which Voznesensky, Kuznetsov, and other high party officials lost their lives; and his final responsibility for the completely falsified "doctors' plot." The latter-day Stalin was portrayed as a morbidly suspicious paranoiac who suffered from a persecution mania, saw enemies and spies in his closest associates, and demanded servility and obsequiousness from all who served him.

How can this decision to demolish the Stalin myth be explained? What inspired the present leaders to risk the shock and confusion which these revelations would inevitably create in party ranks at home and abroad? Surely they must have been aware that their documentation of Stalin's crimes raised embarrassing questions of their own involvement and responsibility which could not lightly be brushed aside. What motivated them to open this Pandora's box of dangerous inferences and unpredictable consequences?

The Possibilities

IN the absence of authoritative evidence, observers must necessarily resort to speculative hypotheses. Some have attempted to explain the attack on Stalin as a belated decision of his lieutenants to have their day of reckoning and to settle accounts for the humiliation and browbeating to which they were subjected by the Leader while he was still alive. Although such personal factors may have formed part of the background of the decision to demolish the Stalin

[1] *Pravda*, February 15, 1956.
[2] *Ibid.*, February 18, 1956.
[3] *Ibid.*

[4] See *Borba*, March 20, 1956 and *Trybuna Ludu*, March 27, 1956.

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myth, they do not seem significant enough in themselves to impel the present leadership to take such a momentous step.

More persuasive are the explanations which seek to relate the attack on the cult of the individual to the problem of preserving the precarious equilibrium of collective leadership. In this view, the attack on Stalin represents a dramatic effort to bar the way to the emergence of another dictator from within the present ruling group. For the moment at least, it registers the determination of the new rulers to protect their respective spheres of activity by enforcing a vow of fealty to the principle of collective leadership. Since dependable information on the actual relations which prevail within the ruling group is unavailable, it is difficult to document this hypothesis. On its face, however, the assault on Stalin clearly raises a powerful barricade against any immediate effort to build up another *Vozhd*.

Another hypothesis sees the assault on Stalin as a reflection of the increased importance of the military on the Soviet scene. Support for this view can be found in several particulars of Khrushchev's attack—Stalin was deflated as a military leader, officers executed during the Great Purge were cleared, and it was admitted that Stalin rather than the High Command was responsible for the early defeats of World War II. Buttressing this view are the increased recognition and status accorded to Marshal Zhukov in the party high command. Clearly, the Marshals emerge from the Congress with added prestige. Should Stalin's heirs fall out among themselves, discredit each other through accusations of involvement in Stalin's crimes, and thus usher in a period of confusion, the military may well be the residuary legatee of such a struggle. The possibility appears remote, but it cannot be altogether excluded.

Still other hypotheses stress the tactical advantages which accrue to the new leadership as the result of the repudiation of Stalin. By making Stalin the scapegoat for past crimes and portraying themselves as victims of Stalin, his successors seek to dissociate the new regime from some dark and bloody pages in Soviet history and gain freedom to strike out in new directions. At home they perhaps hope that their denunciation of Stalinist methods will be understood as symbolizing the determination of the new leadership to come to terms with expectations and aspirations which were thwarted during the Stalin era. Thus the assault on Stalin is taken to signify the desire of the new rulers to court popularity among the social groups that matter in Soviet society by giving the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia some assurance of security and some encouragement to exercise initiative without undue fear of consequences. In this perspective the attack on Stalin emerges as part of a process of correcting the overwhelming centralism of Stalinist administration by building a more efficient system of rule in which less emphasis is placed upon police terror and more on incentive, initiative and enthusiasm.

Considerations of foreign policy may also have played a not insignificant role in the decision to repudiate Stalinism. Despite the temporary disarray and confusion which the attack on the Stalin cult could be expected to precipitate in the satellite areas and in Communist parties abroad, there were important long-term advantages to be weighed in the balance. The appeal to Yugoslavia was obvious. The renunciation of the Stalinist heritage also served to remove an important road block to cooperation with Socialists and other left-wing democratic groups. For leaders of new nationalist movements in Asia and Africa whose qualms about the Soviet Union centered on dictatorial methods rather than economic policy, here was a potentially dramatic way of indicating that the new Soviet leadership was embarked on a new course which would clear the way to more intimate relations. Whether or not the gesture will have long-term significance, its tangible immediate appeal to non-Communist circles abroad should not be underrated.

It should be stressed that the views cited above are mere hypotheses. Some may appear more plausible than others, but the available evidence makes it impossible to assign a leading role to any one of them. One can only infer that on balance the new rulers were persuaded that the Stalinist legacy was an incubus which cast a shadow of distrust around the new regime and limited its ability to capitalize on the opportunities of the post-Stalin era. It can also be presumed that the new rulers felt sufficiently safely entrenched in power to take the considerable risks of unpredictable reactions which the attack on the Stalin cult might set in motion.

The Retailoring of Ideology

THE tactical flexibility demonstrated in the demolition of the Stalin myth found its reflection in the ideological arena. The Congress provided a platform for a whole series of ideological reformulations which in their collective impact manifested a capacity for fresh maneuver, in striking contrast to the rigidities of latter-day Stalinism.

The analysis of contemporary capitalism revealed a new realism. Although Khrushchev hailed the deepening "contradictions" of the capitalist economies, the thesis of capitalist "crisis" was stated cautiously.

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In effect, Khrushchev's Central Committee report recognized that an upsurge of industrial output and technological innovation was underway in the West, though he sought to minimize its significance by attributing it to the arms race and other temporary stimulants. He not only warned against an oversimplified view of the rapid decay of capitalism, but went further and urged the closest investigation of Western industrial achievements in order to use them "in the interests of socialism." Here again, Stalin's prognostications in *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* of a contracting volume of production for the United States, Great Britain, and France were specifically rebuffed. In the words of Mikoyan:

This assertion does not explain the complex and contradictory phenomena of contemporary capitalism and the fact that capitalist production has grown in many countries since the war.[5]

The restatement of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence appeared to reflect a new awareness of the dangers of thermonuclear warfare and of the realities of the atomic stalemate. The theory of peaceful coexistence was proclaimed without the usual qualifications that it could endure at the most only "for a prolonged period." Indeed, Mikoyan specifically repudiated the view that peaceful coexistence was a mere tactical expedient, "that we want peaceful coexistence for a while, until we are well prepared to attack and to impose communism by force of arms." [6]

In pledging the Soviet Union to peace, however, the party leadership made clear that it still retained its faith in the ultimate triumph of world communism and that it proposed to wage an ideological struggle against capitalism "with the utmost vigor and consistency." [7] The proceedings of the Congress as well as the actions of the new leadership indicate no disposition to relax the offensive to spread the blessings of communism throughout the world. The new Khrushchev-Bulganin arsenal of intensive industrialization, diplomatic maneuver, economic competition, cultural penetration, subversion, and indirect provocation of brush-fire wars is no less formidable than the cruder threats, pressure, and bluster which Stalin employed in the period of the Berlin blockade and the Korean adventure.

In calling for peaceful coexistence, the Congress confronted a theoretical dilemma. How could the theory of peaceful coexistence be reconciled with the Leninist thesis that wars are inevitable in the era of imperialism? As Jerzy Morawski, secretary of the Polish Party, later noted in an article in *Trybuna Ludu* on March 27, 1956:

It is known that up to now there existed in our propaganda a certain obscurity in this respect. We called on people to increase their efforts for peace. We told them that the forces of peace were superior to the forces of war. But at the same time the thesis that wars were inevitable in the era of imperialism hung over our heads like an ominous fate.

The problem was resolved at the Congress with breathtakingly simple dialectic dexterity. The Leninist precept was proclaimed as correct when it was announced, as remaining in force until the outbreak of World War II, but as no longer applicable because of the changed correlation of forces between the camps of socialism and capitalism. According to the new formulation, "war is not fatalistically inevitable." [8] Thus the danger of war exists and in Mikoyan's words, "the danger that the imperialist states will attack the countries of socialism . . . will continue to exist until socialism has attained an overwhelming superiority over capitalism throughout the world." [9] But in Communist eyes the forces at the disposal of the Soviet Union are now so strong that, given their effective mobilization, an attack on the Soviet Union can be prevented. The intensification of peace propaganda throughout the world is designed to transform this opportunity into a certainty.

"Peace" Paths and Parliaments

THE desire of the party leadership to present its most pacific front to the world and to win new friends and allies for communism found striking exemplification in the new theses on "Forms of Transition to Socialism in Different Countries." Again it was the satellite press which let the cat out of the bag. In explaining the background of the new theses in *Trybuna Ludu*, Morawski observed:

The bourgeoisie has always represented the Communists as bloodthirsty people, advocates of an armed insurrection and civil war, regardless of conditions and of the situation.

The object of the new formulation is to dispel this image. "It is not true," stated Khrushchev at the Congress, "that we [Communists] regard violence and civil war as the only way to remake society."[10] According to the new version of Communist history, Lenin sincerely hoped to win power by peaceful means and was forced to resort to violence because of "the violence of the bourgeoisie."[11] Responsibility for

[5] *Pravda*, February 18, 1956.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] The quotation is from Shepilov's speech, *Pravda*, February 17, 1956.
[8] See Khrushchev's speech, *Pravda*, February 15, 1956.
[9] *Pravda*, February 18, 1956.
[10] *Ibid.*, February 15, 1956.
[11] See Mikoyan's speech, *Pravda*, February 18, 1956.

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the civil war is placed on the interventionist armies and the counterrevolutionaries; the Bolsheviks themselves planned "a path of peaceful development for Russia." According to Mikoyan, the Czech *coup* was carried out "by peaceful means":

The Communists came to power after concluding an alliance not only with the working people's parties that were close to them but also with the bourgeois parties that supported the common national front. [As for] the working class of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland and other people's democracies, [they] achieved victory in the socialist revolution in their own way, but also without civil war.[12]

The new directive for Communist parties abroad was summed up by Khrushchev as follows:

. . . the present situation offers the working class in a number of capitalist countries a real opportunity to unite the overwhelming majority of the people under its leadership and to secure the transfer of the basic means of production into the hands of the people. . . . The working class, by rallying around itself the toiling peasantry, the intelligentsia, [and] all patriotic forces . . . is in a position to defeat the reactionary forces opposed to the popular interest, to capture a stable majority in parliament, and to transform the latter from an organ of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the people's will. . . .[13]

This hint of a peaceful road to "socialism" appears clearly intended to set the stage for parliamentary collaboration with Social Democrats and others who may be amenable to Communist appeals. It has already been accompanied by a planned series of visits by prominent Socialists to Moscow and by Communist wooing of Social Democrats abroad. It signalizes the beginning of an effort to revive the Popular Front tactics of the mid-1930's.

Whether the new strategy will have its intended effect remains to be seen. In some respects it is disingenuous. The commitment to parliamentarism is accompanied by a reservation "that in a number of capitalist countries the violent overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the sharp aggravation of class struggle connected with this are inevitable."[14] It is pronounced in a context which clearly implies that the present leadership views the road to power in the so-called people's democracies as "peaceful." It is qualified by a clear affirmation that "there can be no transition to socialism" without political leadership in the hands of the "vanguard," that is, the Communist Party.[15] For Social Democrats who still recall the fate of the independent Socialist parties in the people's democracies, the warning should carry its own antidote.

[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*, February 15, 1956.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*

The Party in the Saddle

The 20th Congress also furnished the opportunity to reassert party supremacy at home and redirect the main lines of its activity. Despite a flurry of recent speculation abroad based on a supposed growth in the power of the managerial elite and the officer corps at the expense of the party apparatus, the Congress revealed that the party leadership is determined to assert the primacy of the party in every walk of life. This was notably true in the economic realm. Khrushchev called on the party apparatus to put economic tasks in the forefront of their activity:

The work of a party official should be judged, in the first place, by the achievements of the economic unit for the success of which he is responsible. Officials who do not appreciate this point are incapable of guiding the efforts to advance the economy, and should be replaced in good time as being insufficiently fit for party work.[16]

Khrushchev also called for a reorientation of party ideological work to connect it directly "with the struggle for the realization of the practical tasks of Communist construction." His insistence on practical propaganda went so far that he found it necessary to protect himself against charges of pragmatic empiricism. "Some dogmatists," he noted, "might read in the above remarks underestimation of the propaganda of Marxist-Leninist theory." But he gave no ground. "There is no need to enter into polemics with these dogmatists . . . revolutionary theory must be applied creatively, not dogmatically." [17]

The Congress also revealed a fear that the party had laid too great a stress in recent years on the recruitment of the intelligentsia and that it was necessary again to widen its mass base and extend its grass roots constituency. Suslov, who delivered the main speech on party organizational work, declared that "party organizations must . . . radically increase the proportion of workers and collective farmers among new recruits." [18] The presence of 251 production workers from industry and transport and another 187 from agriculture among the delegates to the Congress was designed to symbolize this latest turn in membership policy.

In other respects, the membership of the party showed relatively little change as compared with the situation at the time of the 19th Party Congress. As of February 1, 1956, the party had a membership of 7,215,505, of whom 6,796,896 were full members and

[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*, February 15, 1956.
[18] *Ibid.*, February 17, 1956.

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419,609 candidate members.[19] These figures registered a growth of nearly 800,000 members and a loss of approximately 450,000 candidate members.

Perhaps the most striking development was the aging of the party leadership. At the 18th Party Congress in 1939 only 3 percent of the delegates were over 50 years of age. By the 19th Congress in 1952 this figure had increased to 15.3 percent; at the 20th Congress it reached 24 percent.[20]

Changes on Top

SIGNIFICANT changes also took place in the composition of leading party organs. Out of 133 full members of the Central Committee, 53 were elected for the first time. Of 122 candidate members, 76 were newly elected. As in earlier years, the largest single bloc in the Central Committee consisted of union republic and *oblast* party secretaries.

The membership of the Presidium itself remained unchanged. Nikolai M. Shvernik retained his position as an alternate member of the Presidium and was also named chairman of the CPSU Control Committee. P. K. Ponomarenko, the present ambassador to Poland, lost his seat as a Presidium alternate but remained a member of the Central Committee. Five new members were designated Presidium alternates in the following order: Marshal G. K. Zhukov, Minister of Defense; L. I. Brezhnev, First Secretary of the Kazakhstan Party organization; N. A. Mukhitdinov, the Uzbek First Secretary; D. T. Shepilov, *Pravda* editor; and E. A. Furtseva, First Secretary of the Moscow city organization and first woman to be named a member of the Presidium group. Brezhnev, Shepilov, and Furtseva were also designated Secretaries of the Central Committee to fill out the old roster of Khrushchev as First Secretary, M. A. Suslov, P. N. Pospelov, N. A. Belyayev, and A. B. Aristov. The new appointments appeared to reflect Khrushchev's influence since all of them had formed part of his entourage in recent years.

Among changes in party organization, a special bureau of the Central Committee for the Russian federation (RSFSR) was established with Khrushchev as chairman. This was defended as a method of insuring "more concrete and operational leadership . . . of the Russian federation." Also, the party Control Committee of the Central Committee was deprived of the right to maintain field representatives functioning independently of the local party bodies in the republics, territories, and regions. This and other minor changes seemed to have a twofold purpose: one, to rationalize and simplify the party structure, and two, to give the work of the party functionaries more operational content.

The Legacy of Stalinism

IN many respects, the 20th Congress stands out as a congress of anomalies and paradox. Despite the striking repudiation of Stalin, the shadow of Stalinism lingered over the Congress. Calls for a revival of intra-party democracy and a return to Leninism were combined with warnings that all challenges to the monolithic unity of the party would be sternly rebuffed. Allegedly erroneous ideological formulations came in for sharp criticism. Without mentioning names, Khrushchev again took Molotov to task for his heretical pronouncement that the Soviet Union had so far laid only the basis for the foundation of socialism. The consumer goods campaign of the Malenkov era received a glancing blow in Khrushchev's denunciation of "wiseacres who counterposed light industry to heavy industry, arguing that priority for heavy industry had been essential only at the early stages of Soviet economic development, and that the only job now was to force the pace of the development of light industry."[21] Khrushchev also used the platform of the Congress to call a halt to those "extremists" who wished to go too far too fast:

> **For we also have leading workers who interpret gradual transition from socialism to communism as a signal for implementation of the principles of Communist society at the present stage. . . . On the basis of such utopian views, a negligent attitude to the socialist principle of material incentive began to take root.[22]**

Like Stalin before him Khrushchev made clear that deviations from the party line would not be tolerated.

There were still other Stalinist reminders. The relaxation of police terror and the assurance that the new regime would put an end to lawlessness and arbitrariness were coupled with a warning by Khrushchev that ". . . distrust for the workers of the state security agencies . . . is incorrect and very harmful," that "enemies have always tried and will go on trying to hinder the big job of building communism," and that "we must in every way raise revolutionary vigilance among the Soviet people and strengthen the state security agencies."[23]

The Sixth Five-Year Plan approved by the Congress reasserted the priority of heavy industry and appeared basically Stalinist in its emphasis. The new agricultural decrees announced shortly after the adjournment

[19] See Khrushchev's speech, *Pravda*, February 15, 1956.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*, February 15, 1956.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*

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of the Congress called for a reduction of the private garden plots of the collective farmers and for increases in the quota of compulsory work days on the collective farm. Although combined with improved incentive schemes in the *kolkhoz*, the new attack on the garden plots marked further progress on a familiar road which Stalin had sketched in his last ideological testament, *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*.

Tighter agricultural controls and the new heavy industry drive conjure up memories of the past which are not likely to be lost on the Soviet population. To be sure, the bitter pill has been sweetened by new promises calculated to arouse enthusiasm among the Soviet citizenry. Thus Khrushchev pledged the regime to raise the wages and pensions of the lowest-paid workers; to put into immediate effect a two-hour cut in the working day on Saturday and before holidays; to institute a forty-hour week in the course of the Sixth Five-Year Plan; to reestablish the six-hour working day for adolescents between 16 and 18; to give more attention to the disabled and the aged; to improve the working conditions of women; to provide longer maternity leaves; and to abolish tuition fees in all educational institutions. How these proposals will be implemented remains for the future to disclose. Soviet citizens of the older generation who remember the broken promises of the Stalinist epoch may well wait warily for general pledges to be translated into specific performance.

The changes of the post-Stalinist era should not, of course, be underrated. Willingly or unwillingly, the new leadership has found itself compelled to respond to aspirations for greater security and improvements in living conditions which were suppressed during the Stalinist era. The changes which have been made open up perspectives of which even the present leaders may be only dimly aware. But so far, concessions have been limited, and the 20th Congress shows the new leadership determined to preserve its system of rule. The reassertion of party supremacy, the insistence on the monolithic unity of the party, the refusal to permit any deviant views to be aired at the Congress—these are hallmarks of continuity with the past which promise no swift transformations in the system of governance. The Stalin myth has been demolished, but the legacy of Stalinism still casts a long shadow.

CAST-OFF **by ILLINGWORTH**

—From the *Daily Mail*, London, February 20, 1956.
(This cartoon may be reproduced in all localities except Japan, Australia, and South Africa).

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The Soviet Ruling Class

By HUGH SETON-WATSON

IN the opinion of orthodox Marxists, economic power determines political power. A ruling class must therefore consist of those who hold economic power, or of their nominees. In industrialized countries with a system of private enterprise—say the Communists—it is the capitalists who rule, sharing power in varying degrees with the larger landowners whenever the latter are a considerable force. But when a proletarian revolution expropriates capitalists and landowners, economic power belongs to the people, and there can no longer be a ruling class. In the Soviet Union there are only two classes, which are not antagonistic but fraternal—the workers and the peasants.

So much for doctrine. In practice, it is true that there are no large private landowners and no private capitalists in the Soviet Union. It is equally true that immense political power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of Communist Party bosses, and that a larger but still small minority of the Soviet population enjoys material and cultural privileges which raise them far above the masses.

The thesis of the present article is that a new social stratum has formed at the top of Soviet society, access to which from below is still possible but is becoming more difficult; that this stratum has striking similarities to the bourgeoisie of nineteenth century Europe, and indeed can best be described by the name "state bourgeoisie"; that it is not itself a ruling class, but that it is the social group from which the ruling personnel is recruited; that it exercizes social pressures which are felt within the higher ranks of the ruling Communist Party; and that the conflict between the ethos of the new state bourgeoisie and the ideological purity of the party is a principal source of tension and change in Soviet life, the political effects of which—though not clearly predictable—are likely to be of vital importance in the long or medium run.

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The Layer of Privilege

IN an attempt to reconcile fact and theory, Joseph Stalin introduced a modification of the Marxist class doctrine by admitting that there was in the Soviet Union a "stratum" (not a "class") distinct from workers and peasants, which he called the "toiling intelligentsia." [1] In 1937, according to the official report on the Third Five-Year Plan, the "toiling intelligentsia" consisted of 9.6 million persons gainfully employed. Of these, 1,751,000 were managers, great and small, in government departments, industry and agriculture. About 3,000,000 were persons belonging to what would be called in the West "the free professions," or in Imperial Russia "the intelligentsia." [2] Of these the most important single groups were 969,000 teachers, 822,000 economists and statisticians, 250,000 engineers and architects, and 132,000 doctors. The remaining categories of the "toiling intelligentsia," a little less than 5 million, included an unstated number of army officers, but consisted for the most part of clerical or lower-level technical personnel.

At the end of World War II, Politburo member Nikolai Voznesensky announced that the numbers of "toiling intelligentsia" had been 11.8 million in 1939. More recent references have been to 15 million, which with dependents would mean at least 30 million.[3] A few figures for individual groups give some impression of the rate of growth. Teachers in 1950 numbered 1,600,000 (about 65 percent more than in 1937); architects and engineers in 1947 numbered

[1] Stalin, "On the Draft Constitution of the USSR," (1936), *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1953, p. 702.

[2] These terms are not exactly interchangeable, but are near enough for the purposes of the present survey.

[3] In the absence of more information on the extent to which wives are employed, and on the number of small children and old people in "toiling intelligentsia" families, it is hard to provide even an approximate estimate.

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900,000 (three and a half times more); and doctors in 1952 numbered 300,000 (more than twice as many).

Not all members of the "toiling intelligentsia" enjoy wealth or privileges. School teachers in villages or small towns and clerical employees in many enterprises are certainly less well paid than the most skilled factory workers. Even so, white-collar work seems to hold a strange attraction for Soviet young people, as shown by frequent complaints in the press deploring the excessive number of office workers in Soviet cities and urging youth to the factory bench or the tractor.

In contrast, the higher levels of the "toiling intelligentsia" are indeed privileged. The most dazzling prizes go to the decorative aristocracy of court poets and ballerinas—and after them, the factory managers, high officials in ministries, senior officers of the armed forces, and bosses of party or trade union branches. The more obvious material privileges enjoyed by these groups have been discussed at length by sociologists and political observers.[4] To list a few of the advantages: salaries of the upper "intelligentsia" as compared to worker and peasant wages show one of the highest income differentials in the world. The Soviet tax system perpetuates this division of wealth by minimizing income taxes and relying for its revenues on the "turnover" (or sales) tax, which operates heavily against the low-wage groups. With greater wealth, the upper stratum can obtain private dwelling houses and other property, which now can be passed on to children as inheritance. In addition to material privileges the upper stratum enjoys great social prestige, bestowed in many forms of recognition such as titles of rank and decorations.

Privilege Perpetuated

ANOTHER advantage enjoyed by the intelligentsia has been the opportunity to give their children a far better education than that available to the children of workers and peasants. The subject deserves pause in view of recent decisions affecting education announced at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in February. In brief, the Congress Directives on the Sixth Five-year Plan announced that from next autumn fees for the top three classes of secondary schools and universities would be abolished and that by 1960 universal secondary education would be achieved "basically" in cities and "rural localities."

The fees now abolished had been introduced in 1940 side by side with a decree establishing a system of "Labor Reserves" by which youths of age 14 to 16 could be mobilized for industrial training, to be followed by a four-year assignment to work in an industrial enterprise. The double effect has been to make higher education easier for children of better-paid parents and to deprive one-third or more of the country's school children over 14 of the chance to complete their secondary education. While the number of children drafted for the "Labor Reserves" substantially diminished in the 1950's and while rising wages partially offset the penalty worked by the educational fees, there is no doubt that the well-to-do have been grossly favored in the matter of education.

The abolition of fees will undoubtedly mean that the children of high officials will now encounter keener competition in seeking entry to middle schools and universities. At the same time this move cannot be looked upon as the establishment of full equality of opportunity in preparation for careers. The low standard of living among the poorer elements of the Soviet population still dictates that all members of the family become wage earners as soon as possible. More important, increased emphasis is now being laid on a "polytechnical" method of education, by which is meant the most suitable training for industrial and agricultural labor. The problem of access to the kind of education which qualifies youths for later responsible posts in management and government administration still remains. Competition for places in good schools most highly qualified to get their pupils into the best universities will be as acute as ever, and parents whose financial status, geographical location and "connections" with powerful persons are greatest will do best for their children. That such pressures are exerted is attested to by occasional complaints in the Soviet press that parents have even resorted to bribery of school officials on behalf of their children.

In this respect, perhaps the most interesting of the recent decisions on education, announced to the Congress by Khrushchev, is the government's intention to build a number of so-called "boarding schools" of top-level standard. In a remarkable comment, Khrushchev stated that the new institutions were to be modeled after such prerevolutionary aristocratic schools as those for the corps of pages, the cadet corps and the institutes for the daughters of the gentry. Located in pleasant localities, the schools are to have "spacious classrooms, good dormitories, well-appointed dining rooms," the "best available" teachers, and ample provision for extra-curricular activities. Admission fees will be charged, but partial or com-

[4] See, for example, W. W. Kulski, "Classes in the Classless State," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (January–February 1955). The article discusses in detail the various privileges of the upper stratum listed further in the paragraph.

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plete scholarships will be granted to those poorer children admitted.

The purpose of the schools, according to Khrushchev, is the rearing not of an aristocratic caste but of the "builders of a new society, persons of great heart and high ideals, who are selflessly serving the people." If, nevertheless, these schools become elite institutions whose graduates acquire a preferential status—as seems to be intended—the wealth and influence of high Soviet officials seeking to enroll their children are likely to be decisive, and the number of poorer children who enter them will be small. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to suppose that these fee-basis schools are designed in part to compensate the present upper intelligentsia—that is, to preserve relatively exclusive opportunities for the education of their children in the face of keener competition in other schools.

Adding this development to the other privileges which the upper intelligentsia enjoys, it appears that the elitist tendencies of the Soviet regime will be as strong—if not stronger—in the 1960's as in the 1950's.

A New Kind of Bourgeoisie

A POINT of interest about the upper stratum of Soviet society is its curious similarity, in tastes and moral outlook, to the Victorian bourgeoisie of nineteenth century Britain and Western Europe. There is the same dreary puritanism professed (if not always practiced) in private life, the same moralizing literature and "nice, catchy tunes." The difference is that whereas self-made businessmen had no power in nineteenth century England to dictate what should or should not be written, painted, or composed, a monolithic committee of Soviet politicians has precisely such powers. That Khrushchev exercises them somewhat more liberally than did Andrei Zhdanov (Stalin's right-hand man in the 1940's) does not alter the basic fact that control exists.

The Soviet upper stratum is not a purely managerial group, not is it an intelligentsia, though it includes both these categories. It seems to this author that it is a bourgeoisie—not a *private bourgeoisie* like that which existed in Western Europe from the Reformation on and which carried out the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century—but a *state bourgeoisie* created in corruption of early Bolshevik principles by the process of state-initiated industrial revolution, as pursued by Stalin since 1928. This point can be made clearer by some brief comparisons of the history of Russia and of Western Europe.

The bourgeoisie (in German, *Bürgertum*) or middle class (*Mittelstand*) is essentially a product of post-

—Vova gets failing marks and you don't do anything about it.
—Bring the teacher to me, and I'll have a little chat with him!

From *Krokodil*, April 20, 1955.

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Reformation Western Europe. The name "middle class" precisely describes its historical position between the upper class of landowning nobility, which provided military leadership in time of war, and the masses of peasants who tilled the soil and supplied soldiers when required.

The middle class had three main component groups. First were the merchants and manufacturers, who in the Middle Ages were already playing an important part in such countries as Flanders or Italy. Second were the intellectuals. In the Middle Ages these were to be found almost exclusively in the Church. One of the most important consequences of the Reformation was the rise of a secular cultural elite, outside the ranks of the Church, which by the seventeenth century had become an important element of society in lands as different as Holland, England and France.

The third group were government officials. These, too, were provided in the Middle Ages largely by the Church, but became increasingly secular after the Reformation. Their numbers and influence grew with the gradual rise of the modern state. In the France of Louis XIV and Colbert there already existed a government bureaucracy, partly recruited, yet as a group distinct, from the landed nobility.

In the Protestant countries these three groups steadily approached each other in outlook during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even in Catholic and despotic France the same trend could be seen before 1789. In the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution, the growth of modern cities and the spread of education greatly accelerated the process. All three groups grew rapidly, and all three increasingly shared a common outlook or ethos, which can not unreasonably be called "bourgeois."

It is important to stress that the business class (first merchants and small manufacturers, then modern industrialists and bankers) is historically only one of the components of the bourgeoisie. To identify "bourgeois" with "businessmen" or "capitalists," as Marxists only too often do, is a dangerous error. Marx himself used the words "bourgeois" and "bourgeoisie" loosely. In the West European and especially the English society which Marx observed, businessmen obviously held enormous power. They were the most important element in the bourgeoisie—or middle class—but they were not identical with it.

Classes in 19th Century Russia

When one examines the historical development of Russia one finds an essentially different pattern.

It is true that all the historical groups mentioned above—landowning and military nobility, merchants, intellectuals and government officials—existed in Russian history. But their relation to each other is not the same.

It is hardly possible to speak of an upper class in Russian history. True, the nobility owned the land and from the seventeenth century onwards wielded immense power over the peasant serfs. But unlike the nobility of preindustrial Western Europe, it had no political power as a group. Individual nobles were powerful because they held high offices of state. Power was concentrated at the top, in the autocrat and his immediate collaborators. Almost all initiative in Russian history, all great political and social changes, issued from the monarchical power. This is the exact opposite of the experience of Britain or Holland, where initiative sprang largely from a series of social elites—feudal barons, landed gentry, seafaring merchants, factory owners, trade union leaders. Even the privileges granted to the Russian nobility by Catherine II in the second half of the eighteenth century did not endow it with a corporate consciousness. The nobility produced individual statesmen, individual military leaders and individual rebels, but as a social class it was passive. Russia was ruled not by the nobility but by a bureaucracy.

In the nineteenth century the numbers and power of the bureaucracy increased. The growth of modern industry and a modern state, especially after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, made this result inevitable, but it was accentuated by the Russian tradition that all leadership must come from the autocracy. The Russian bureaucracy had in no sense a bourgeois outlook. To some extent it possessed the typical ethos of a landowning military class, such as can be found in most of pre-industrial Europe. But the outlook and prejudices of the landowner were probably less important in determining the outlook of the Russian bureaucrat than the habit of subservience to the autocracy.

The merchant class in Russia shared this subservience. Russian businessmen in the nineteenth century had no political ambitions. They received generous support from the government in the form of high protective tariffs and lucrative state contracts. Russian capitalists made large profits, but they were rather the instruments than the initiators of Russia's industrial revolution, which was consciously promoted by the government for reasons of military power and imperial greatness. In this respect the course of Russia's industrialization and the status of its business class closely resemble conditions in the same period in Japan, but differ sharply from those of Western Europe. In the West the private businessman

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was the driving force behind industrialization and acquired in the process great social and political power. In Russia the power was held not by capitalists but by bureaucrats.

The third component of a "middle class," the intellectual professions, also existed in nineteenth century Russia. But the position of this intelligentsia in Russian social and political life was quite different from that of its Western counterpart. The secular cultural elite of Western Europe grew up with the rest of society, by a process that extended over many centuries. Its ideas grew with it, and grew out of the social reality in which it lived. The Russian intelligentsia was artificially created by the policies of Peter the Great, Catherine and Alexander I. It identified itself with the contemporary Western cultural world and acquired contemporary Western ideas, imported from abroad in prefabricated form at a time when the social realities to which the ideas were related barely existed on Russian soil. Belonging to a different culture from its own people, cut off from the Russian peasants by a chasm that could not really be bridged, the Russian intelligentsia was also excluded from political influence or responsibility. In this vacuum, Russian intellectuals were not only attracted by the most revolutionary of Western ideas but were able to preserve them in all their revolutionary purity, uncontaminated by experience of the realities of political practice. Maximalism, utopianism, the demand for "all-or-nothing" flourished in these conditions. Contempt for compromises and partial reforms was the prevalent attitude, though there were of course exceptions. The last thing that could be said of the Russian intelligentsia was that it had a bourgeois ethos.

The Emergence of a Russian "Bourgeoisie"

THERE was in fact no Russian bourgeoisie, no middle class, indeed no upper class. There were bureaucrats, businessmen and intellectuals, but each lived a separate life. The bureaucrats ruled; the intellectuals railed at the regime (and a minority among them plotted against it); while the businessmen carried on their work, gratefully accepting the government's favors.

This situation was changing at the end of the nineteenth century. The rapid increase of industry in the 1890's; the development—despite government obstruction—of constructive work by local authorities (*zemstvos*); the increasing number of skilled workers; the improved material conditions and education of at least a large section of the peasantry; and the greater freedom of speech and organization after 1905: all made themselves felt. By 1915 something existed which could be called a Russian bourgeoisie. Government officials, businessmen and intellectuals were drawing nearer to each other, were beginning to share a common ethos. This trend was of course reversed by military disaster and Bolshevism.

Yet after nearly forty years of Soviet society, and twenty-five years of Stalin's industrial revolution, there is a new situation which yet has features of the old. In the second Russian industrial revolution, far more than in the first, state initiative was the driving force. Today there are no private capitalists. But the industrial revolution has produced a dominant social stratum remarkably similar to that which emerged from the earlier industrial revolutions in Western Europe. In the Soviet Union the borderline between political and economic administrators, between bureaucrats in the classical sense and managers of economic enterprises, has been wiped away. At the same time the old cultural chasm which separated the intelligentsia from the masses has been largely filled. Obviously intellectuals are more educated than workers, in Soviet Russia as in every country. But the difference lies within a single culture—a post-industrial urbanized society to which all belong. The intelligentsia is no longer an isolated caste. The borderline between it and the managers or bureaucrats is also blurred. All three share a common ethos, belong to a single dominant stratum, as was never the case in the old Russia. The best phrase to describe this stratum is surely "state bourgeoisie."

The Primacy of Party Officialdom

A DOMINANT social stratum is not, however, the same thing as a ruling group. The state bourgeoisie does not rule Soviet Russia. The most that can be said is that from its ranks are recruited the greater part of those who rise to power. Power is of course still concentrated in the Communist Party, and the highly centralized structure of the party ensures ultimate control by the top leadership.

The official apex of the party pyramid is the Central Committee, numbering 133 full and 122 probationary members as of the 20th Congress. Of these 255 persons, seven are the supreme bosses (Khrushchev, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Molotov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Malenkov); 106 are full-time officials of the party apparatus at the central, republican, provincial or city level; 55 are ministers or high officials of central government departments; 21 are premiers, deputy premiers or presidents of republics of the

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Union; and the remaining 66 belong to various smaller categories—soldiers, diplomats, policemen, intellectuals, trade union and Komsomol (youth league) officials, *etc.*

In theory, it is the Central Committee which exercises "collective leadership" over the party. In practice control is concentrated at a still higher level, the Presidium, with 11 full and six probationary members. Here, apart from the seven supreme bosses, there are six party officials, two ministers who hold no other party offices (Pervukhin and Saburov), one military man (Zhukov) and the trade union boss (Shvernik) who is at the same time chairman of the party Control Committee. In this body, where there must be genuine discussion of real problems, the predominance of full-time party officials is considerably greater than in the Central Committee as a whole.

Though the members of the Central Committee seldom meet as a body, the permanent office of the Central Committee, with its various departments, is a center of enormous power. At its head is the Secretariat of six persons, whose leader is the First Secretary, Khrushchev. It is responsible for all important appointments in the Soviet Union—in the party, government and industrial hierarchies. It may be assumed that the First Secretary takes special care in the selection of first secretaries of provincial party committees in the RSFSR. These have recently included persons who had served as provincial first secretaries in the Ukrainian SSR, of which Khrushchev was himself the boss for ten years.

Khrushchev has also increased his direct hold over the Russian federated republic by the creation of a new Bureau for the RSFSR, responsible to the Central Committee of the CPSU. Khrushchev is its chairman. His deputy is Belyaev, a member of the Secretariat. The other members are the provincial first secretaries of the four largest industrial centers of the RSFSR (Moscow, Leningrad, Gorki and Sverdlovsk); the heads of two new departments of the Central Committee office, dealing respectively with cadres and with agriculture for the RSFSR; and the Premier and First Deputy Premier of the RSFSR. It is worth noting that in the last year a certain devolution of power from the Council of Ministers of the Union to those of the republics has meant some loss of authority by the Union Council of Ministers, of which Khrushchev is not a member. The creation of the new Bureau has thus further increased his power in relation to those of his Presidium colleagues who are Union ministers.

Overlapping Functions

The distinction between an official of the party hierarchy and a party member who holds high office in the government hierarchy is theoretically simple, but can be applied in practice only to those individuals the details of whose careers are known. Of the seven supreme bosses, the careers of three (Khrushchev, Malenkov, Kaganovich) have been essentially in the party apparatus; three more (Bulganin, Molotov, Voroshilov) have combined high party and governmental posts over a long period; while the seventh (Mikoyan), though he began his career as a party organizer, has been since 1926 an economic administrator. The two other economic administrators who are members of the Presidium (Pervukhin and Saburov) joined the party respectively in 1919 and 1920, at the ages of 15 and 16. Neither, however, appears to have held a party office, and both have been fully occupied since the late 1920's in engineering, industrial management or economic planning.

Both in the Presidium and in the Plenum of the Central Committee the party officials outnumber the administrators. There is little information on lower levels. Of the 1,355 delegates to the 20th Congress, who form an elite of the whole party, only 438 were "directly employed in production" (251 in industry and 187 in agriculture). The remaining 917 delegates must have come from the state bourgeoisie, but the proportion of party officials to other administrators and managers cannot be determined. Of the total membership of the party (announced as 7,215,505), it was stated that 801,384 had a complete, and 256,856 an incomplete higher education. Together these groups represented nearly 15 percent of the membership, in contrast to nearly 12 percent at the 19th Congress.

The higher levels of the state bourgeoisie and of the party membership overlap. The party official combines various functions. He is an administrator, a propagandist and a sort of all-round stimulator whose job is to interfere, to exhort and to goad people into greater efforts in all sectors of society within the area for which he is responsible. To the administrators outside the party machine he seems a nuisance, a menace and a parasite. Of this the evidence of Soviet literature and of defectors from the Soviet Union provides a sketchy but convincing picture.[5] Yet at the same time the party official's life in some ways resembles that of the administrators; it is sometimes to his interest to cooperate closely with them against

[5] A systematic discussion of this evidence can be found in H. Achminow, *Die Macht im Hintergrund* (Power Behind the Scenes), Ulm, 1950. The author is a defector from the Soviet Union.

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his own superiors, and he shares with them the values and outlook of the state bourgeoisie. Of this, too, Soviet literature, and the periodical denunciations in the press of "cliques" and "ganging up" provide clear evidence.

The Long-Run Impact of the Bourgeoisie

OBVIOUSLY the state bourgeoisie as a whole would like a quieter life, less exhortation and denunciation. The repudiation of Stalin's excesses can only please them. Khrushchev's proposed boarding schools will be welcome. On the other hand the obvious determination of Khrushchev to reassert the primacy of the party over the government, of the political factor over the economic, his obvious intention to base his own power on a strengthened party machine, can hardly be to their taste.

It is tempting to think of Mikoyan as the spokesman of the state bourgeoisie, and of Mikoyan-Pervukhin-Saburov as a nucleus in the Presidium around which opposition to the ascendancy of the machine might crystallize. It would, however, be unwise to exaggerate the role of individual personalities, important though these unquestionably are. Whether or not the spokesmen change, the social pressures of the state bourgeoisie as a whole remain, and the Presidium cannot ignore them.

It is difficult to assess what effect a growing influence of the state bourgeoisie in Soviet political life might have on foreign affairs. The state bourgeoisie are not likely to have much enthusiasm for the revolution-mongering which has been the essence of Communist Party international policy since 1917. They may also understand that the dogma of a hostile "capitalist" world has been the main theoretical justification for the Stalinist system of terror of which they have long been victims, and draw from this the conclusion that a genuinely peaceful foreign policy is directly in their interest. In both these respects the position of the state bourgeoisie as a whole resembles that of the army. On the other hand, neither the state bourgeoisie nor the generals are likely to favor giving up the conquests of 1945 in Eastern Germany, Poland, the Danube countries or Korea. Moreover, forces that make for "normality" may not be effective if the world in which they operate is highly "abnormal." Many of the major conflicts of world politics in 1956 do not owe their origin to Moscow, but Moscow must take account of them. When the waters of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are troubled, the temptation to fish is irresistible.

In sum, it would be a mistake to expect immediate results from the growth of the Soviet state bourgeoisie. But over the next decade or two this evolving phenomenon of Soviet society may be a factor of immense importance in transforming the international scene. Controversial and obscure as the subject may be, it deserves the continuing attention not only of "Soviet experts" but of all serious students of world affairs.

Is the Soviet Union Changing?

By MARSHALL D. SHULMAN

OF the vocabulary which recurs in the daily flow of commentary on the Soviet scene, perhaps no word has been used—or misused—more than the word "change." Newsmen and analysts frequently use the term "change" without clarifying, or perhaps being sure themselves, what they have in mind. This makes for confusion in their attempts to answer such questions as: Has there been a change in Soviet policy? Is the "new look" really new and, if so, when did it begin? Can the Soviet Union ever really change? Or is the answer that the more Soviet policy changes, the more it is the same?

In trying to arrive at meaningful answers to these questions, the first step is to differentiate between the various levels on which change can, and does take place.

There is, first of all, the level of atmospherics. In

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an age in which the practitioners of the art of manipulating public opinion have achieved great proficiency, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between appearance and reality. This is particularly true of the USSR. The fact is—and the world sometimes loses sight of it—that the air may be charged or it may be relaxed, without much change in the underlying situation.

Is Mr. Molotov grim and forbidding, or is he donning cowboy hats at Cheyenne, visiting museums in New York and Chicago? Are the Soviet representatives chilly and isolated, or are they genially mixing, posing gladly for the photographers? Is the non-Communist world peopled by "fascist beasts" and "capitalist warmongerers", or by good fellows who are simply misguided?

It is hard to think of these changes of manner, and the changes of atmosphere they engender, as being manipulated independently of underlying purposes or attitudes. The unhappy truth is that the world public, in failing to comprehend this fact, often helps to delude itself. One week, the story of Quemoy and Matsu is bubbling furiously on the front page; the next week the furor has died out—without the actual situation having changed much one way or the other. Conversely, the Moscow leaders smile and "the whole world smiles with them"; without too much difficulty, the Soviets create an atmosphere of détente—of relaxing tensions—without having to address themselves to the cause of those tensions.

This is not to say that atmospheric changes are not important. They are. They may be very significant as one index of the Soviet outlook at any given time. But unless they are related to something more substantive than manner, they signify only that the Soviet rulers wish to create a different atmosphere, either more militant, hostile and tense, or less so.

Tactics and Strategy

THERE is another level, somewhat more substantial, at which change takes place, and which might be called "tactical". Flexibility in tactics, set forth by Lenin as a cardinal principle of effective action, has led to an alternation between periods of militancy and periods of broad cooperation. In the trade these are known as "Left" and "Right"; the accusatory forms for comrades who missed the turn are "Sectarian" and "Opportunist."

For example, is this a period in which the Soviet Union is joining, or walking out of such groups as the World Health Organization or UNESCO? Is it granting visas to Western citizens, or is it keeping the Iron Curtain tight-shut? More important, are foreign Communist parties being militant, tough, purist about their revolutionary doctrine and scornful of cooperation with the leaders of "bourgeois" groups? Or are they endeavoring to form United Fronts, Popular Fronts, National Fronts, or other forms of broad, collaborative action in the parliaments and in the trade union movement? [1]

Moving one level deeper, there is a kind of change in Soviet policy which can be described as "strategic". It is never altogether clear where tactics leave off and strategy begins, but the distinction here is between the day-to-day operations in local situations and broad policy direction. In this sense, strategy chiefly reflects the Soviet estimate of the main characteristics of the current period of history. Is it a period of capitalist crises, when revolutionary possibilities seem in motion, and the time is ripe to press the advantage? Or is it a period of "temporary stabilization of capitalism?", a period when the world power situation is adverse to Communist expansion?

In the former case, Soviet leaders stress the authority in Marxism-Leninism concerning the division of the world into two hostile camps; the "irreconcilability of the two systems," the "inevitability of conflict." In the latter case, authority is found for the doctrine of "peaceful coexistence of states having different social and political systems."

One point of confusion that arises here is that the non-militant strategy is sometimes spoken of as a strategy of "retreat." This is not necessarily the case. In a time of the "temporary stabilization of capitalism," and the relative strengthening of the "capitalist camp," the Soviet Union may direct its energies to strategically defensive objectives—as, for example, the weakening of the Western defense alliance. This may involve a postponement of the fulfillment of affirmative Soviet objectives, but it represents a continuation of the struggle by other means.

Permanent Change: A Utopian View

IT should be noted at this point that the three modes of change that have been mentioned—atmospheric, tactical and strategic—have all varied on a cyclical pattern in the four decades of Soviet history. An atmosphere of détente has been followed by an atmosphere of tension; a tactic of cooperation by a tactic of militancy; a strategy of defense by a strategy of offense.

[1] A distinction must be made between United Fronts "from above" and those "from below": the former are Communist attempts at cooperation with the leaders of non-Communist parties or trade unions, and hence signify a collaborative period; the latter are efforts to compete for rank-and-file support from the other groups and therefore may constitute a militant sectarian tactic.

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Is there, however, no possibility of a more fundamental kind of change? Those described so far are instrumental changes, representing different ways of approaching the same ultimate objectives. Must the possibility of a change in Soviet objectives be excluded?

One approach to this problem is a utopian one. It is based upon a belief in the possibility of a sudden transformation in the situation. The question is often asked: "Are the Soviet leaders really sincere about peace?" It is an irrelevant question, for even if it could be demonstrated that the Soviet leaders prefer to achieve their objectives without war, as doubtless they do, it would not follow that these objectives were compatible with the survival of democratic societies or conversely that war could be excluded as an instrument of Soviet policy if their objectives could not be otherwise achieved.

What the utopian image connotes is the possibility in the near future of a radical transformation in the Soviet system, involving a drastic modification in Soviet objectives, an abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, of Communist analysis and expectations, of the Soviet form of government. It envisages a situation in which the USSR would have relationships of trust and confidence with other states; in which the world level of armaments could be safely reduced; in which police state methods would no longer be used; in which neighboring states would be free to choose their own governments, and the anticipation of Soviet Communist world hegemony would be forever put aside. Much as one may pray for this ultimate outcome, one must be grateful to Khrushchev for reminding the world, as he did recently, that this will happen only "when the lobsters in the sea learn to whistle."

It is one thing to hold this kind of image in our mind as the expression of an ultimate hope, but to expect such change in the foreseeable future, or to expect the Soviet rulers to accept proposals which would, in fact, presuppose this kind of drastic transformation in their regime, is not warranted by any observation of the Soviet system. Such thinking is not only delusory, but dangerous, for it leads to an underestimation of the problem at hand.

Soviet Society in Transition

THERE is, however, a fifth sense in which the word "change" can be used. It seems reasonable to believe that, like all other human organizations, Soviet society does not remain static, but continues to evolve. Four decades may be a short time to historians, but it is a long enough period to warrant consideration of what secular changes—that is, changes of a long-term, non-cyclical character—may be taking place in Soviet society, whether planned, unintended, or perhaps even unconscious.

The observer is on hypothetical ground here, and must guard against letting his analysis be colored by his wishes. There are some indications of a conservative trend in Soviet society, which, one is tempted to hope, might impose a restraint on Soviet foreign policy. But even if it is acknowledged that internal changes would affect foreign policy, there is no way to judge whether such effect would be beneficial. Nevertheless, here is a dimension of possible change which requires continuous attention.

It is now almost 40 years since the October Revolution. The present leadership, with a few exceptions, has not been a product of the conspiratorial prerevolutionary experience. From a backward peasant society, the Soviet Union has been transformed into the second industrial power of the world. Its urban population has increased by 17,000,000 even within the past five years. Literacy has increased enormously. It would be hard to believe that profound social changes were not taking place in the light of these developments.

When one tries to define such changes, and to describe their effects, however, one ventures into an area of speculation and of disagreement. Inferences must be drawn from the second-hand study of Soviet society through the Soviet press and literature, impressions of occasional visitors to the USSR, and interviews with former Soviet citizens.

The impression that emerges most clearly is that of a maturing society. The class strata appear to be more clearly defined and stabilized. Some students of the subject refer to this as a process of stabilization; others describe it as a condition of increasing rigidity.

In interviews of a large number of former Soviet citizens, Harvard University's Project on the Soviet Social System made the striking finding that attitudes corresponded less with such factors as age, sex, politics, arrest experience, and even nationality, than they did with the factor of class identification.[2] That is to say, if one knew whether an individual thought of himself as a peasant, an unskilled laborer, a skilled workman, or a member of the intelligentsia, one could fairly well chart out the pattern of his responses to a variety of questions about the regime, the society, the police, the government, family relations, living conditions, and so on.

[2] Final report of the Project is to be published shortly as *How the Soviet System Works: Cultural, Psychological and Social Themes*, by Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles and Clyde Kluckhohn, Harvard University Press.

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It appears probable that there is less mobility between the classes than was the case twenty years ago, but whether the wide spread of income distribution and the opportunity of privileged groups to pass on advantages to their children is resulting in a hardening class structure is a matter of speculation and interpretation. Such studies as we have of generational differences in the Soviet Union show a much higher degree of matter-of-fact acceptance of the regime and its propaganda among those age twenty than among those who are forty.

Whether these indications point to the development of a conservative society is a question which requires further studies of the Soviet social system.

The Rise of the Technical Intelligentsia

ONE of the fascinating questions in this connection is the effect which increasing industrialization and urbanization may be having on the Soviet society. The most extreme position on this point was taken by a British writer who argued that rapid industrialization had already produced sufficiently widespread literacy and material well-being in the Soviet Union as to result in a modification of the totalitarian structure, and that a kind of social democracy was already in process of emergence.[3]

Among American scholars there are some who believe it possible that such a modification of the harsher aspects of the police state might take place over very long periods of time. There are others, however, who take the position that modern totalitarianism is a unique historical phenomenon, and that there can be no smooth continuum of evolution out of the totalitarian spiral into something which is not totalitarian. Any appreciable reduction of the centralized power of the dictatorship, these scholars believe, could lead only to collapse and will therefore be avoided if possible.

On a more modest range of speculation, however, it seems reasonable to conjecture that the process of industrialization is developing a technical intelligentsia, with some of the aspirations, tastes and demands of industrial middle classes elsewhere. There has been some discussion whether this did or did not mean a new bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union, and a new Victorian Age to go with it.[4] The irony, from a Marxist-Leninist point of view, of having a bourgeois revolution follow a proletarian revolution has not escaped some non-Soviet observers.

[3] See Isaac Deutscher, *Russia, What Next?*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1953; also review by Morris Watnick in *Problems of Communism*, No. 6, 1953.

[4] See article by Hugh Seton-Watson in this issue—*Ed.*

THE CPSU DEFINES "FREEDOM"

Party organizations must resolutely combat every deviation from the policy of the Communist Party, from Marxist-Leninist ideology. Communist Party rules give every Communist the right to discuss all questions of party policy freely. But the party has never tolerated and will not tolerate petty bourgeois licentiousness and particularly anti-party statements in its midst, even if they are few in number. The party cannot permit the freedom to discuss problems to be interpreted as the freedom to propagate views alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism because this contradicts the provisions of the party rules and the party principles.

—"The Communist Party Has Won and Is Winning by Virtue of Fidelity to Leninism," *Pravda*, April 4, 1956.

When it comes to the effect of these developments, if they do in fact exist, another area of uncertainty must be traversed. It is possible that Soviet citizens who are primarily production men, managers and technicians may have, within their general loyalty to the Soviet system, somewhat separable interests from those who have come up primarily through the party ranks. It seems likely, as interviews have suggested, that the production people press for a reduction of arbitrariness, of political interference in their operations, and that they can make a good case for increasing rationality in the Soviet system if high production goals are to be realized. It is also possible that, as consumers, these well-rewarded technicians—the so-called *dacha* (or villa) set—may strengthen the demand for consumer goods.

Alternative Possibilities

IT does not necessarily follow, however, that a separate managerial class will emerge to challenge party leadership. The party has shown great care in absorbing into itself such separate interests as the army and the technicians. Successive party Congresses have shown a rising level of age and educational experience among party officials, and among the members of the present party Presidium are men whose experience has been primarily as production experts. To the extent that a pluralism of interests may develop from the process of industrialization, it seems quite possible that these separable interests will contend with each other within the party, and not outside or against the party. The effect of this process, if any, might be a modification of party policies rather than a weakening of the party position.

Even if all this were to come about the unanswerable question remains whether such modifications in the direction of a more rational order would soften,

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or merely internalize, the instrument of terror; whether it would result in a less ideological and less expansionist Soviet state, or a more efficient and ultimately more dangerous one. While one must hope that over a long period these changes will result in a society easier to live with, one cannot with assurance exclude the possibility that they may point instead toward 1984.

In any case, these are the kinds of changes that have to be measured in terms of decades, not of months. One comfort that an historical perspective offers is that other revolutionary movements have experienced a life cycle in which the revolutionary impulse gradually yields to domestication. It must be reckoned as a possibility, at least, that over a long period of time the ideological content in Soviet motivation may diminish in force, may become increasingly ritualistic, though the vocabulary may remain the same. Whether the Soviet Union will follow historical precedents in this direction, and whether there will be time for any slow evolutionary development, are questions that only the future will answer. It will be difficult enough to recognize such changes when and if they come to pass.

Soviet Foreign Policy

SUMMING up what has been said, to get an effective picture of the Soviet problem it is necessary to create a composite image, as though one were looking through a series of slides held one behind the other. Each of these slides represents one aspect of reality: first, the conscious and cyclical shifts in Soviet policy—the atmospheric, tactical and strategic planes of movement; behind this, the slow secular trends in Soviet society, insofar as they can be perceived; finally, the major moving forces of the twentieth century, as they manifest themselves in the Soviet Union and in other parts of the world.

Keeping this image in mind, let us now concentrate for the moment on the slide in the foreground—that is, the characteristics of recent Soviet policy showing conscious changes in the direction of Soviet efforts abroad.

A retrospective study of Soviet foreign policy since the end of World War II suggests that the main watershed for present developments is to be found in the 1949–50 period. Most of the developments since that time represent not new departures but successive experimentation and refinements in doctrine and methods.

In brief, the period from 1947 to 1949 had been one in which Soviet policy reflected an open hostility, aimed at maximizing the advantages of the molten power situation in the postwar world. The satellization of Eastern Europe, the incitement of violent strikes in Western Europe, the organization of the Cominform around the "two hostile camps" doctrine, the seizure of Czechoslovakia, the Berlin blockade, the violent language of hatred, irreconcilable conflict and revolutionary advance—these characterized Soviet policy in the two-year period which marked the most intense and overt phase of the so-called "cold war."

By the period 1949–50, it had become apparent that this policy was producing adverse effects from the Soviet point of view. The Berlin blockade had ended in failure and had clearly demonstrated the willingness of the Western powers to resist Communist expansion at the cost of war if necessary. Western Europe had begun its economic recovery, and as a consequence had regained a degree of political stability. Soviet hostility had driven the Western powers into an unprecedented degree of cohesion.

Instead of withdrawing from Europe, as might have been anticipated, the United States was now firmly committed to remain, and was in the process of organizing close political, economic and military bonds with the advanced industrial nations of Western Europe. The Brussels Pact, the Western Union, the Marshall Plan, the Greek-Turkish Aid Program, the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, and finally the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was beginning efforts to incorporate Western German military power into its orbit, constituted a trend which would in time alter the power relationships in Europe to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union. To match the Soviet stress on development of military potential, the military budgets of the United States and the Western European powers were being raised to unprecedented peacetime levels. All of these developments were clear reactions to the overt hostility of Soviet policy in the preceding period.

In taking stock of their situation, the Soviet leaders were able to include two favorable developments in 1949; the triumph of the Chinese Communists, and the explosion of a Soviet atomic weapon. Each of these events had profound consequences. The rise of Mao created new possibilities and new problems in the East. The development of Soviet atomic capabilities began to alter the mood, and consequently the political configuration of the European picture, as neutralism became a significant factor.

The attack on Korea in June 1950, while it appeared to many at the time as another manifestation of militant Soviet policy, may in fact have been more significant as a step toward exploiting the dynamism of the Asian movement as against the relatively static Euro-

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pean situation. Since it had the effect of intensifying Western reaction to Soviet militancy to an extraordinary degree, it may have hastened a re-evaluation by the Soviet Union of the effect of its previous policies, and made more urgent the introduction of alternative policies.

Emergence of the New Policy

WHAT followed was a period of Kremlin experimentation with policies designed to check the adverse trend, at the same time making use of favorable developments. There were some regressions to the old militancy in this period, but whether they were attributable, as a few observers have held, to factional disputes within the Soviet leadership must remain a matter of speculation. In any event by the fall of 1952, the new policy had been developed, and in October was formulated at the 19th Congress of the CPSU. With some modifications, but with considerably more flexibility and deftness in application, essentially the same policy has continued in force since the death of Stalin.

The post-Stalin leadership has been more consistent, more thorough, more sensitive to the actual conditions of the outside world, and consequently more successful in creating an atmosphere of détente. It would be difficult, for example, to visualize Stalin making the trip to Belgrade to attempt to undo the Tito episode, and it is clear that Stalin's arbitrary and autocratic rule of the party leadership was among the "obsolete ideas" which Khrushchev, at the 20th Congress, said the party had resolutely swept aside, "as a brake on our forward movement." These changes of manner are of great importance, but the main lines of analysis and of policy formulated in the latter days of Stalin remain in force. The modifications of doctrine presented at the 20th Congress—such as the non-inevitability of war, the sanctioning of different paths to socialism, and the acceptance of the possibility of Soviet socialism coming to power by parliamentary means—are significant, but mainly as the elimination of hindrances to the fuller realization of the policy of coexistence and United Fronts.

The New Policy in Operation

AT the strategic level, Soviet policy in this period has been defensive in character. That is to say, its primary objective appears to be the negative one of checking and weakening the Western defense system. To do this, it is seeking to reduce United States power and influence in Europe, Africa and Asia, to eliminate air bases abroad, and to encourage centrifugal tendencies in the Western alliance. Minimally, it is seeking to deny the industrial resources and military capabilities of Western Germany and Japan to the Western alliance, and optimally, it may hope for the accession of the resources of these areas to the Soviet complex. The appeal of communism to neutral nations and neutralists individually is likely to be enormously enhanced by the recent suppression of the symbol of Stalinism.

This strategy has been supported by non-militant tactics. The Communist movement has, in the words of Stalin at the 19th Party Congress, raised the banner of national independence, which the bourgeoisie had dropped. That is to say, it has used nationalism as an anti-coagulant in the non-Communist world, as for example, in helping to defeat the proposed European Defense Community, and in exacerbating colonial conflicts. It has collaborated with elements of the

—From the *News Chronicle*, London, March 20, 1956.

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bourgeoisie on broad front programs—united, popular or national fronts—in order to bring about changes in the national policies of individual Western countries. It has made effective use of neutralism and the peace movement, to circumscribe the freedom of action of the Western governments.

It should be noted that the primary function of the international Communist movement in this period has been not to achieve power but to support Soviet policy by influencing the policies of the respective countries in such a way as to weaken the Western alliance. It should also be borne in mind that the fall in membership of the Communist parties, or the fall in readership of the Communist newspapers, should not be taken as indices of the reduction of influence of the Communist movement abroad; this is part of the price the Communist movement consciously pays for a prolonged period of non-militancy in behalf of political objectives.

These tactics in turn have been supported by efforts to create an atmosphere of détente. The Soviet Union has abstained from unnecessary bellicosity; it has eased a number of pressure points—as for example, Turkey, Finland, Austria and Yugoslavia; and it has endeavored, by words and symbolic acts, to bring about a "reduction in international tensions" and the "peaceful coexistence of states having different social and political systems," to quote the motif of many speeches by Soviet leaders.

By stressing peaceful coexistence and reducing the fear of war, the Soviet Union helps to create a climate in which divergencies among the Western allies prosper and the will to build joint military strength is weakened. Also, by encouraging the West to reduce its military expenditures, the Soviet leaders believe they are eliminating a prop which sustains the capitalist economies at their present high levels. The importance which Soviet leaders attach to their conviction regarding the inevitable coming crises of capitalism was further demonstrated at the recent 20th CPSU Congress.

At home, meanwhile, the Soviet Union is continuing emphasis on the development of heavy industry, seeking to correct shortcomings in the fields of agriculture and transportation, supporting a modest development of Chinese industrialization, and coordinating the economic planning of the entire Communist area.

There has been occasional speculation—sometimes expressed in quite categorical language—that economic and political weaknesses in the Soviet orbit have been determinants of Soviet foreign policy. It is evident that such problems as agricultural shortages are matters of serious concern to the Soviet leadership, and to the extent that these factors do circumscribe Soviet freedom of action in the field of Soviet foreign policy, they operate in the same direction as the external power considerations which have been mentioned. But as far as the known evidence goes, there is no indication that the problems of the Soviet system are of such magnitude as to justify the expectation of a collapse of the regime, or a mood of desperation or surrender on the part of the leadership.

What emerges from this brief review of the familiar elements of Soviet policy is a consistent pattern of adaptation of strategy, tactics and atmospherics to the favorable and unfavorable factors currently prevailing. Though in a sense a defensive response to the strengthened Western power position of 1949–50, they represent an effort to advance toward Soviet objectives by alternative and more promising means. They indicate how the Soviet leaders may rely on the factor of time in order to attain a dominant power position in the world even without war. Finally, it should be recognized that this entire pattern, and every part of it, is still completely capable of being reversed at any time.

The Prospects Ahead

WHAT, then, is the outlook for the future? It is possible, as some maintain, that the attacks on Stalin and Stalinism at and following the 20th Party Congress indicate a profound change evolving in the character of the Soviet regime, and that these attacks have set in motion a doctrinal unfreezing at all levels—artistic, scientific, intellectual, managerial and even political.

It is also possible, as is argued by others, that the circumstances of the attacks on Stalin suggest the existence of dissension among the rulers of the USSR.

These things are possible. But until future events cast further light on the present situation, it would be imprudent for the rest of the world to act upon such tenuous hypotheses, and to cast into discard four decades of Soviet behavior as irrelevant. Stalin's successors may trample his grave and his image, but who can say with assurance that Stalinism is beyond resurrection, or that his heirs are in fact less menacing than he? The penalty for rejoicing prematurely could be severe.

The only prudent approach is to assume, until events demonstrate the contrary, that in scrapping Stalinism, the present leadership is seeking to remove a hindrance to the more effective prosecution of its persistent goals.

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If the present terms of conflict, somewhat muted and altered as they are, can be prolonged for an indefinite period, it is at least a possibility that over a period of time there may result an abandonment in fact of the Soviet commitment to an ideology of conflict and of world communism. As a goal, this does not give much comfort to those who desire their solutions neat, but in the nature of things, we are dealing with possibilities, not certainties. Until the day comes when experience demonstrates that Communist aims and Communist power are no longer irreconcilable with the continued existence of the non-Communist world, we must contend with them resolutely, and, if necessary, indefinitely.

In endeavoring to prolong the policy which the Soviets call "peaceful coexistence," we should be under no illusions as to what the term means to the Moscow leaders. It does not mean peace as we understand the word. It means a continuation of the struggle on political and economic grounds. It could mean an alternative route for the Soviet Union to a dominant world power position.

Dangerous and unstable though "peaceful coexistence" may be, we have no choice but to accept the gauntlet. It is preferable to its alternative, which is war. It may be that over a period of time, some of the causes of tension—as distinguished from the atmosphere of tension—will yield to negotiation, and that settlements can be worked out which transpose the power relationships into a lower key. But experience has taught that such fundamental settlements, however great the pressures for them, are reached only when Soviet interests require them. Undoubtedly the most decisive instrument for bringing such agreements to pass would be the existence of thriving economic and political relations between the non-Communist nations of the world. The real question is thus whether the free world will understand and accept the requirements of this period in history, and make of it an advantage rather than a disaster.

Socialist Morality In The USSR

SOME GENERALIZATIONS

It is evident that morality, as every other form of social consciousness . . . exerts a positive or negative influence on the development of society. In capitalist countries bourgeois morality impedes the development of society, while the progressive communist morality of our country furthers the development of society. The capitalist regime turns men into egoists, hypocrites, and contributes to the moral corruption and the moral degeneration of personality. The victory of socialism over capitalism represents a true victory in human relationship and the creation of moral standards which lend beauty and nobility to man's moral character. The October Revolution and the victory of socialism in our country brought with it moral purity and the most progressive and humane moral standards.

—*Radio Tbilisi (Georgia), March 20, 1956.*

SOME ADMITTED FACTS

The cult of the individual and the practice of leadership which developed under Stalin did much harm. His disregard of the standards of party life and the principle of collective leadership, his frequent personal decisions on questions led to a distortion of the party principle and party democracy, violation of revolutionary law, and unjustified repressions. . . . The cult of the individual helped to spread . . . the methods . . . of administration by mere injunction, and instilled disregard for initiative from below . . . [It] led to the development of such ugly practices as slurring over shortcomings, the varnishing of reality, and deception. We still have quite a few toadies and sycophants, people . . . brought up on servility and subservience . . . The cult has also done much harm in ideological work . . . Dogmatism flourished . . . Many works on philosophy, political economy, history and other social sciences . . . consist of collections of quotations from works by J. V. Stalin and eulogies of him. . . . Many of our historical and especially wartime motion pictures and works of literature and paintings are chiefly dedicated to the eulogy and glorification of Stalin . . .

—*Pravda, March 28, 1956.*

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Minds in Revolt

Editors' Note: Though overshadowed by the more recent and spectacular developments attending the 20th CPSU Congress, the wave of literary or cultural "revolts" which swept with rising force through most of the East European satellites during 1955 probably represented the most significant manifestation of intellectual ferment in the Soviet orbit to date. In their inception, pressures for greater cultural freedom were given a measure of encouragement by the satellite regimes, which in turn took their cue from the cultural "thaw" already inaugurated in the Soviet Union. Whatever the genesis of these movements, however, they quickly generated a momentum of their own. Offered an inch, the writers boldly tried to grab a yard. Granted a mere "thaw," they applied a blow-torch to the icy shackles of "socialist realism" and party regimentation. The issues in dispute were primarily cultural, but in the course of the debate the rebels felt impelled to voice the general disillusionment and frustrated aspirations of the satellite peoples.

The reactions of the regimes were not uniform. As the following articles show, Communist Hungary and Bulgaria, taken aback by what had emerged from the slightly-opened lid of Pandora's box, took steps to slam it shut again. In Poland, which has consistently trod a different, more independent path, the regime showed greater tolerance: it warned the rebels but did not silence them.

Now there are signs that the decisions of the 20th CPSU Congress have given a fresh stimulus to cultural ferment in the satellites. At the 19th session of the Polish Council of Art and Culture on March 25–26, past "intolerance" and "persecution of critical thought" were assailed in franker terms than ever; and although, on April 6, party First Secretary Edward Ochab warned against failure to distinguish between "justified criticism" and "positions which cannot be of advantage to the party," the regime on April 21 took a new step of appeasement by removing Wlodimierz Sokorski, symbol of past repression, as Minister of Culture.

In Hungary, meanwhile, literary rebellion broke out anew at Writers' Union meetings in mid-March and mid-April, causing the party newspaper *Szabad Nep* to publish a fresh denunciation of "base attacks against the party under the guise of criticism." Writer Sandor Lukacsi, one of the ringleaders, has reportedly been punished by expulsion from the party.

In Bulgaria Khristo Radevski, head of the Writers' Union, warned in March that "liberalism" will be tolerated only within party-prescribed limits, but the subsequent demotion of Vulko Chervenkov from the premiership as a symbol of Bulgarian Stalinism seems likely to spur rather than discourage the pressures for wider cultural freedom.

Poland: Voices of Disillusion

By CZESLAW MILOSZ

IF the word "typical" means anything in such a context, it is doubtful that Poland can accurately be called a typical satellite of the Soviet Union. For while the satellite nations generally respond in somewhat the same fashion to shifting policies and trends in the USSR, there are individual divergencies which are, perhaps, of greater interest and importance than any broad, surface similarity. Poland's highly individualistic and, in some respects, unique response to the post-Stalinist Soviet policy of cautious liberalization in culture, commonly known as the "thaw," is a case in point.

To sum it up briefly, the "thaw" in Poland developed later, penetrated the national consciousness more deeply, and has continued longer without suppressive counteraction by the regime, than in most of the other East European satellites. Whereas in Hungary, for example, criticism was already being levelled at party restrictions on creative literary freedom as early as mid-1953, the first rumblings of cultural rebellion in Poland were not heard until the spring of 1954.

Mr. Milosz, one of Poland's finest poets and translators, first collaborated with the new regime, serving as Cultural Attaché in Washington and Paris, and then, no longer able to lead a double life, fled to the West. He is the author of *The Captive Mind*, Alfred Knopf, 1953. His most recent book is *Seizure of Power*, Criterion, 1955.

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Once launched, however, the Polish "thaw" steadily gathered strength and momentum until, in the latter half of 1955, it seemed to take on the character of a genuine crisis of the national conscience. What started out as a cautious venting of dissatisfaction with the sterile formulas of socialist realism and bureaucratic party controls over cultural activity developed into a sort of public confessional in which convinced Marxists like the poet Adam Ważyk bared their disillusionment with the present realities of Polish life under communism.

Judging from the available evidence, nothing thus far published in the Soviet Union or any of the other satellites has come near matching, in bitterness and irony, some of the articles and poems which have appeared in print in Poland. Yet, to date (April 1956), the Polish Communist regime—which turned on the "thaw" and could just as easily shut it off at any time it desired—has still taken no really strong action to curb the criticism, whereas both Hungary and Bulgaria, at the end of 1955, clamped down sharply on expressions of "anti-party views" much less provocative than those seen in Poland. All this adds up to a puzzling and seemingly contradictory picture, but the enigma is at least partially explained by the survival in Poland, despite attempted "Stalinization," of a relatively strong spirit of cultural and national independence.

The Stalinization Process

THE campaign to "Stalinize" Polish thought began in 1949 after the absorption of the Socialists within the United Workers' (Communist) Party and the ousting of Wladislaw Gomulka as party secretary general for his advocacy of an allegedly Titoistic "national way to socialism." [1] The event which touched off the campaign was the Writers' Congress at Szczecin in January 1949, attended by Soviet as well as Polish writers. The proceedings obviously were designed to enforce greater cooperation with the party on the part of the Polish writers, who found themselves charged by Communist spokesmen with not injecting enough socialist content into their writings, with failure to introduce Marxist principles properly, and with neglecting "to strengthen their ties with the masses." They were enjoined to toe the party line and reorient their writing according to the principles of socialist realism.

The other arts—painting, sculpture, the theater, architecture and music—also underwent the same process of party regimentation. Professional associations of writers and artists were brought under bureaucratic party supervision and control. In order to keep their jobs, university professors had to conform to party orthodoxy just as biologists had to extol the dubious genetics of Trofim Lysenko. Polish schools of philosophy, though internationally known for their contributions in logic and epistemology, were shoved aside by party philosophers drawing their inspiration from Marx-Lenin-Stalin and their guidance from the Moscow review *Voprosi Filosofii* (Problems of Philosophy).[2]

These efforts to regiment Polish thought and culture along Soviet Communist lines were far from completely successful. Writers and artists, perforce, paid lip service to party doctrines and tried to find solace for their consciences in the Marxist law of "historical necessity." Yet by no effort of the will could they convince themselves that the stereotyped Soviet painting, poetry or literature of the Stalinist era was worthy of praise and emulation. The rebuilding of Warsaw in a Soviet-style architecture considered both ugly and pretentious cut national artistic pride to the quick. The inevitable result of cultural "Stalinization" was boredom and apathy.

Indeed, the forced imitation of everything Soviet, which keynoted the period from 1949 to 1954, made virtually no one happy including Polish Communists. Knowledge of the Soviet Union is particularly widespread in Poland since practically everyone has had a relative or friend who, at some time during the past twenty years, either died in a Soviet concentration camp or barely survived the ordeal. Few Poles, therefore, harbor false illusions about the Soviet system, and they need no Koestler or Orwell to dramatize its meaning for them.

In the ranks of the party itself, there were many who had their own private reservations about Stalinism. Not a few of the officials of the Polish CP had personally experienced the arbitrary vindictiveness of the system through incarceration in

[1] According to the most authoritative information available, Gomulka was taken into custody by the regime in July 1951 and remained under house arrest or some form of surveillance until his release was recently announced as a result of the decisions of the 20th CPSU Congress in Moscow. In a speech on April 6, Edward Ochab, present First Secretary of the United Workers' (Communist) Party, formally absolved Gomulka of the major charges against him, though his party status has not been restored.

[2] The Polish philosophical review "Philosophic Thought," organ of the party school, consisted largely of reprints from its Moscow counterpart.

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Soviet concentration camps during the 1930's.[3] This fact should not be overlooked, for it is an important key to Poland's divergent course as a satellite and the regime's tolerance, since 1954, of a relatively pronounced breakaway from Stalinist rigidity.

The importance of this breakaway should not be minimized by reason of its centering in the cultural field. In a Soviet-type society public debate on artistic and literary issues is a significant bellwether of opinion in general. The regime's political and economic policies are decided either in Moscow or among a few top party officials. Consequently, in the public consciousness, they lie, so to speak, in a reserved sphere, and the decisions handed down from the "summit" must be accepted much as one accepts bad weather. This leaves little room for political writing except of a propagandistic nature, with the result that public interest tends to focus more on art and literature.

In this respect, the Polish situation today is reminiscent of that in Tsarist Poland of the 19th century. There is a striking contrast between the slogan-ridden poverty of thought which characterizes political writing, on the one hand, and the sublety of the polemics carried on regarding poetry and painting, on the other. Writing of art, one is able to criticize certain aspects of official philosophy in an oblique fashion, whereas direct criticism is much more difficult—and risky.

Development of the "Thaw"

ALTHOUGH the "thaw" was relatively late in coming to Poland, it would be erroneous to regard it as a mere execution of orders from Moscow. There was a genuine sense of relief and a desire to profit from the new atmosphere of relaxation. The initial pronouncements of party dignitaries were duly cautious and little different in wording from their previous routine speeches, but gradually the movement toward a liberalization of cultural controls gathered speed.

The first clearcut signs of the "thaw" emerged at the 11th session of the Polish Council of Art and Culture, which met in April 1954 to discuss shortcomings in cultural propaganda pointed out at the Second Congress of the United Workers' Party the month before. Criticized for their ineffectiveness in "educating" the masses, the participants—writers, artists, musicians, architects and others—retorted by assailing dictation from above, restrictions on the artists' freedom of expression, discouragement of experimentation, and the reduction of socialist realism to a set of trite patterns.

The effect of the Council discussions was to set in train a vigorous controversy, carried on in literary and cultural publications, between the emboldened critics of socialist realism and the defenders of the party line. A group of young writers assailed not only the practice but the whole theory of "socialist realism," and they also criticized bureaucratic cultural controls which inspired fear in writers and artists and vitiated their creative effort. [4]

These attacks evoked strong replies from faithful party writers such as Kasimierz Brandys and Jerzy Putrament. Putrament, for example, declared that a certain camp of critics, instead of trying to cure "socialist realism of various objective diseases," actually desired to destroy it altogether and substitute "bourgeois concepts of art." [5]

Following up these counter-denunciations, the party made an effort to put a damper on the sharpening controversy at the Plenum of the Polish Writers' Association Central Committee in July 1955. Through the mouths of Putrament, secretary of the association, and Stefan Zolkiewski, director of the Literary Research Institute, the critics of the party line were reminded that socialist realism was not to be scrapped, that its principles remained valid and only needed a less rigid interpretation. The critics' over-exuberance was ascribed to petty bourgeois pressure.

Despite this mild reproof, the ferment in literature continued unabated, and meanwhile the "thaw" spread in other directions. The International Youth festival, held at Warsaw in July 1955, presented an opportunity for Poland to pose as a cultural show-window of the Soviet orbit, and the regime was anxious to put its best foot forward. Polish painters were authorized to stage an "exhibit of young painting" in which they could be as "western" as they liked. This marked the real beginning of the "thaw" in fine arts.

Today Polish periodicals like *Przeglad Kulturalny* (Cultural Review) dress their pages with works of Matisse, Picasso, Klee, Calder and Moore. Polish vanguard painters, who for years were forbidden to

[3] Most Polish Communists imprisoned by the Soviet Union were lured to Moscow and arrested by the NKVD in connection with the Stalinist purges of 1937–38.

[4] One particularly bold critic, Witold Wirpsza, attacked "procurer-bureaucrats" for expecting writers to prove that communism automatically meant greater human happiness. *Sztandar Mlodych* (Banner of Youth), Warsaw, August 14, 1954—Editors.

[5] *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), June 19, 1955. (Another writer, Wilhelm Mach, denounced the critics as "cultural subversives" whose scorn for "socialist realism" was but a disguise for their contempt for "People's Poland." *Ibid.*, March 6, 1955—Editors).

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MARX: A ROADBLOCK

—Hey, citizen, get out of the way! Can't you see the director is in the car!

From *Szpilki*, Warsaw, January 29, 1956.

exhibit their works, are now acclaimed for their stubborn refusal to bow to party dictation, while those who sacrificed their principles on the altar of "socialist realism" are accused of servility. In the scientific field, the same charge is being levelled at Polish biologists who, under party duress, subscribed to Lysenko's theories.

But perhaps the most striking feature of the Polish "thaw" has been its extension into the area of Marxist ideology. The central figure in this development is Professor Jozef Chałasínski, prominent Communist sociologist, whose sharp criticisms of Leninist philosophy as applied to the social sciences touched off a storm of controversy which still continues to enliven the Polish intellectual scene.

In a series of articles published in *Przeglad Kulturalny* and other learned journals during the latter part of 1955, Chałasínski bluntly asserted that the dogmatic party interpretation of Marxism had all but destroyed Polish sociology in the years 1949–54. In particular, he voiced strong doubt that the theory of "two opposing trends"—"progressive" and "reactionary"—sufficed to explain the whole history of human civilization.[6]

The orthodox party philosophers, led by Adam Schaff, reacted sharply to Chałasínski's criticisms, denouncing them as an attempt to break with Marxism-Leninism and calling Chałasínski a "liberal"—a label with definite libellous connotations. To this, Chalasínski retorted that the orthodox school was a "school of timidity" which seemed to "fear that independent thinking may lead further than it ought to go."

Though the philosophical debate still continues, its results have been inconclusive because the participants are skirting around the most vital issues. Nevertheless, one of them, Dr. Oscar Lange (former Polish Ambassador to Washington), committed an unwitting blunder in a December 1955 issue of *Przeglad Kulturalny*, where he quoted from Stalin's work on socialist economy not many weeks before it was repudiated at the 20th CPSU Congress in Moscow.[7]

The Rationale of Recantation

THUS, Poland today presents a picture of widespread intellectual ferment. It is a picture full of kaleidoscopic mutations and replete with signs which suggest that what comes to the surface is but a small part of what is going on underneath. Some observations on the psychological and other aspects of the current change may serve to clarify its essential features and motivations.

The human mind is prone to seek a rational justification for any absurdity. Terror is more easily borne when one explains it, not as the result of unlimited power in the hands of other men, but as a manifestation of suprahuman necessity. This explains why, in the 1949–54 period, a number of Polish philosophers and art and literary critics developed involved theories about what constituted decadent art and healthy art, about socialist realism in poetry and the novel, and so on.

Now this whole edifice, built with sweat and pain, has toppled to the ground. The facade is still maintained by the party for form's sake, but everyone knows that behind it there is nothing but thin air. The consequences are grave, for if the literary or artistic criteria which one rationalized as inevitable concomitants of a socialist system are revealed to have been the whim of a dictator, does this not cast doubt upon the whole Marxist concept of historical necessity? Indeed, some critics have already made this concept the butt of uncomplimentary jokes.

By the same token, doubts are created concerning the wisdom of political and economic policies. They

[6] *Przeglad Kulturalny* (Warsaw), September 29–October 5, 1955.

[7] Oscar Lange, "Concerning the Logical Application of Marxist Analysis," *Przeglad Kulturalny*, December 8–14, 1955.

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continue to be dictated from above as before, of course, but they are regarded with less awe. The independent-minded and the heretics are regarded with greater tolerance.

Obviously, in the present Polish situation, those who were the most zealous converts to Stalinism find themselves placed, morally, in a thoroughly unenviable position. When they have tried to back away from what they previously supported, sharp-tongued critics have branded their action as "the art of vomiting." [8] When they have pointed to the darker aspects of Polish life prior to 1954, they have been asked why they remained silent then and speak up only now. These criticisms refer particularly to such party writers as Putrament and Brandys. Artur Sandauer, one of the staunchest critics of the party school, summed up the case against them in these succinct terms, which specifically referred to Brandys' recent writings:

We talk a great deal about the right of people to change. But self-criticism of this kind [Brandys'] seems to suggest self-righteousness rather than a genuinely-willed transformation. Besides, it is obvious that a change in personal belief should stem from a real internal need and should be autonomous, not imposed from the outside. It is difficult to credit the authenticity of personal transformations which occur precisely at the moment of general transformations, and which have led certain writers to advocate psychologism in 1947, to glorify "mass literature" in 1949 only to laugh it down in 1955.[9]

Such a severe judgment, though well-deserved and just in most cases, does not appear warranted in the case of Adam Ważyk, a brilliant poet and a Marxist after the fashion of Gyorgy Lukacs.[10] One might perhaps speculate why, after 1949, he became a leading proponent of socialist realism and produced much that was unworthy of his intelligence, including an ode to Stalin. In any case, when his "Poemat dla Doroslych" (Poem for Adults) appeared in the Warsaw weekly literary review, *Nowa Kultura* (New Culture), in August 1955, its bitter irony and openly-expressed disillusionment with Communist reality created a sensation both in Poland and in the West. (The London magazine *Twentieth Century* published an English translation in its December 1955 issue under the appropriate heading, "The Polish Wasteland"; and a French translation has also come out.)

[8] This term was coined by Ludwik Flaszen, young Communist critic, who made it the title of an article in *Zycie Literackie* (Literary Life), Krakow, October 30, 1955.

[9] Artur Sandauer, in *Przeglad Kulturalny*, February 23, 1956.

[10] Lukacs, a veteran Hungarian Marxist who fled to Moscow after the collapse of Bela Kun's shortlived Commune in 1919, became Hungary's most prominent literary critic under the post-1948 Communist regime. In 1950, however, he was charged by the party with favoring bourgeois influences in literature and was forced to make a public recantation.

Poetry for Adults

THE Poland pictured in Ważyk's stark lines is not the Poland of the propaganda slogans but Poland as it is. In sharp, concise verse he speaks of the pretentious architecture of the new Warsaw, of the masses of uprooted, of the wretched and bestial life in newly-built factory towns, of hooligans and bandits, of alcoholism, of people "who wait for justice." Even his title contains a barb, for it suggests that the poetry of the Stalinist period was for children. Ważyk reserves some of his sharpest shafts for hallowed party doctrine, bringing it down to earth from the sky of abstraction:

They ran to us, shouting:
A Communist does not die.
It never happened that a man did not die.
Only the memory abides.
The worthier the man,
the greater the pain.
They ran to us, shouting:
under socialism
a cut finger does not hurt.
They cut their finger,
they felt pain.
They lost faith.

For the dullness of the mind born of enforced orthodoxy, Ważyk has these bitter words:

It is true,
when these farthing boredoms
howl down the great aims of education,
when the vultures of abstraction pick out our brains,
when students are enclosed in text books without windows,
when language is reduced to thirty incantations,
when the lamp of imagination is extinguished,
when good people from the moon deny us our taste,
then truly
oblivion is dangerously near.

And for party purges and relentless ferreting out of deviations from the party line:

A drowned man was fished out of the Vistula.
A note was found in his pocket:
"My sleeve is right,
my button is wrong,
my collar is wrong,
but my half-belt is right."
They buried him under a willow.

Despite his tone of deep disillusionment, Ważyk does not confess to a loss of basic political faith, but he does ask an end to forcing people to believe in "chimeras":

I will never believe, my dear, that a lion is a little lamb,
I will never believe, my dear, that a little lamb is a lion;
I will never believe, my dear, in a magic spell;

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I will never believe in minds kept under glass;
but I believe that a table has only four legs,
but I believe that the fifth leg is a chimera,
and when the chimeras rally, my dear,
then one dies slowly of a broken heart.

Ważyk, still from a Marxist viewpoint, points accusingly to current party economic policies as distortions of Marxist principles:

I heard a clever lecture:
"Without appropriately distributed
economic incentives
we will not achieve technical progress."
These are the words of a Marxist.
This is the knowledge of the law of realism.
The end of utopia.

His conclusion makes a ringing appeal for a new party policy:

for a clear truth,
for the bread of freedom,
for burning reason,
for burning reason.
We demand these every day.
We demand through the party.[11]

Ważyk's poem, above all, was a daring disavowal of his own past subservience to the party line, and if it provoked the anger of some of his colleagues on grounds of self-righteousness, fairness demands recognition that his words have the ring of sincerity. The party, though discomfited, merely administered a discreet reprimand to Ważyk himself, but the whole editorial board of *Nowa Kultura*, which had sanctioned the publication of the offending poem, was dismissed. According to latest reports, some new poems by Ważyk—still critical, but more moderate in tone—have been published in April, indicating that he and the party have come to an understanding.

Despite the purge of the *Nowa Kultura* editorial board, that same review later published other poems and articles which were every bit as sensational as Ważyk's. [See the poem by Jozef Prutkowski reproduced on this page—Editors.] Meanwhile, Pawel Hoffman's removal as chief editor of *Nowa Kultura* has reportedly been rendered somewhat *pro forma* by his reappointment to a high post in the Polish official news agency (PAP).

The Balance Sheet

THROUGH the present process of "de-Stalinization," the party loses in one area but gains in another. On the minus side, the tolerance of a more critical attitude and freer expression of opinion tends to bring out the ill-concealed gaps and artificial links in a system of thought which had become a set of dogmas held together by a ritual language. For instance, absurd Stalinist theories of art generally were based on Lenin's "theory of reflection," and in the current upsurge against past artistic follies, the theory itself is jeopardized. As yet, no one has dared attack it, but Lenin's ideas in the domain of pure philosophy are already being toned down.

The general tendency is to maintain basic principles intact while trying to eliminate their sad consequences—something akin to attempting to square a circle. This involves blaming past failures on bad men, a practice which certain perspicacious writers have derided as tantamount to trying to cure social evil with sermons and transforming Marxism into an idealistic philosophy. No wonder that "Operation Freedom" in the Soviet world is creating a great deal of chaos.

What was formerly Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism is now officially shortened to Marxism-Leninism *tout court*. There is a return to Lenin—and perhaps a dream of eventual return to Marx—but it is no trifle to arrive at a concrete formulation of what this in-

[11] As translated by Lucjan Blit, *Twentieth Century* (London), December 1955.

WHAT PRICE COURAGE?

"One May," a poem by Jozef Prutkowski, Nowa Kultura, *November 20, 1955, translated in London* Times, *December 31, 1955.*

Skull-decorated notices double and treble, warning and threatening for various reasons.
"Not to be used when stationary."
"Not to be used on special occasions."
"Not below the waist."
"Not above the line."
"It is forbidden to sound wind instruments."
"It is forbidden to prophesy to cobblers."
"It is forbidden to compose poetry, especially when the muses don't wish it."
"It is forbidden to model celebrities in snow."
And to compose out of thin air.
Do not lean out of the window,
And anyhow one shouldn't overstep the line.
But one may crawl along with a haughty mien on a safe path.
No one was ever punished here for being safe.
Slowly, quietly, furtively, and shiftily one may find out what can be got.
What's on the political exchange?
What is the stock of courage today?
Flattery, now here, now there.
Some have been doing it for eleven years and
It's not done without grace.
The editor knows their names and addresses.

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volves in terms of philosophy, art and literature. At present, in the Polish "thaw," we are witnessing only the first chaotic gropings in this direction.

On the other hand, the party stands to gain, in elasticity and greater means of penetration, as much as it loses through the weakening of its monolithic doctrinal basis. Up till now a wide chasm has separated millions of Poles from the party. People mouthed prescribed slogans without believing in them. They shunned the new party literature, biased and distorted, and, instead, quickly bought up reprinted editions of the works of old authors as soon as they appeared. In people's minds there was a clear-cut distinction between real life and its garbled party representation.

Now, however, the party wears a guise of greater reasonableness. By permitting at least a portion of the truth to be spoken, it gains increased capabilities for persuading people to believe in its sincerity and patriotism. It has also created convenient scapegoats—Stalinism, bureaucracy—to shoulder responsibility for past, acknowledged evils. By giving artists and writers greater leeway, it probably hopes to encourage them to produce works not only more colorful and expressive, but animated at the same time with a more convincing Communist spirit.

But there is reason to question whether the party's present course does not, perhaps, involve greater risks than it imagines. As the "thaw" in Poland demonstrates, when people are less obliged to talk in slogans, they feel impelled to voice their disillusionment. One particularly ominous manifestation of this in 1955 was the concoction by some of the younger, more outspoken Polish critics of a "theory of evil immanent to socialism." Its proponents contended that every social system is marked by evils peculiar to it, that the eradication of capitalism in Poland ended the evils of that system, but that new evils peculiar to socialism took their place. They refused, moreover, to subscribe to the belief that collective economy suffices to transform and purify man.

The advancement of this heretical thesis caused the party serious alarm, for it strikes at the very foundations of the "Great Hope" for a decisive break with the past, the "end of pre-history." Its authors were not punished, but the theory was branded as a false creation of "metaphysical minds." Party spokesmen argued that only ten years of socialist construction in Poland was not enough to eliminate the evils inherited from capitalism, and that it was these evils which still persisted, not new ones brought on by socialism. That such a theory was broached, however, underlines the risks the regime is taking.

* * *

ALL in all, the Poland of the post-Stalinist "thaw" presents a somewhat surrealistic picture. As reflected in its current press and periodicals, it is a country where Komsomol members not infrequently ostracize their comrades for *not* attending Holy Mass, where the authority of the security police remains firm despite the imposition of prison sentences on some of its high officials for an over-faithful performance of their duties; where young people are infatuated with jazz and where Thomas Mann and Ernest Hemingway are hailed by some critics as the central literary figures of this century.

It would be risky to draw conclusions from this chaotic situation. Certainly, over-optimism at the present stage appears unwarranted. Poland is in flux, but the change affects tactics and no institutional innovations are in sight. The "thaw" contributes toward the creation of a new mental climate, but a freer language alone does not alleviate the condition of a people. Indeed, it can serve as a camouflage for generally unalleviated conditions.

Still, there can be no return to the past. The new era will be better than the 1949–54 period of Stalinism, or it will be worse; certainly it will be different. Speculations about Poland's future are futile as long as the country enjoys only limited freedom of action within the Soviet sphere.

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Hungary's Rebellious Muse

By FERENC KORMENDI

THE "writers' revolt" which dominated the cultural scene in Hungary during the latter half of 1955 was, without doubt, the most significant manifestation of intellectual unrest to occur in that satellite nation since the advent of the intoxicating influences of the Soviet "new course." It was an open and—at least in its climactic phase—organized rebellion of some of the country's leading literary figures, Communist as well as non-Communist, against the maintenance of rigid, arbitrary and stifling party controls over literary activity. The impact of the revolt can best be assessed against the background of Hungarian literary developments over the past decade.

For a brief interval, between the collapse of the Nazi-installed "Arrow Cross" government in April 1945 and the Communist march to supreme power in Hungary during 1947–48, Hungarian literature breathed an air of freedom such as it had rarely experienced before. Intellectual oppression came to an end, and for a time almost complete liberty of thought prevailed.

The exuberant optimism of the time, undimmed even by a harsh and exploitative Soviet military occupation was voiced by the well-known Socialist poet and novelist, Lajos Kassak, who wrote that the "advent of democracy has brought with it the final removal of spiritual shackles." [1] Cultural activity flourished freely, and there was an eager desire among Hungarian writers to renew long-dormant literary contacts with the western democracies. As one put it:

We (Hungarian writers) . . . stretch out our hands for English, American and French books, and we offer our own (newly-published) works to the free world as our contribution to constructive cultural efforts toward a new, ethical commonwealth of man.[2]

[1] *Corvina* (Budapest), Spring 1947 issue.

[2] Anna Kethly, writing in *Corvina*, Christmas 1946 issue.

Mr. Kormendi, prominent Hungarian author and winner of the "International Novel Prize" for 1932, is presently residing in New York City. Besides fiction and drama, he writes frequently on Hungarian political, cultural and historical affairs.

The interlude of hope and freedom, however, was shortlived. In the wake of the "liberating" Red Army followed a host of Hungarian Communist exiles—politicians and writers who had fled the country after the collapse of Bela Kun's ephemeral Communist regime in 1919 and found asylum in Moscow. There they had been trained for an eventual "comeback" and now, under the protecting wing of the Soviet occupation forces, they set about their assigned task of preparing Hungary for an early Communist takeover of political control.

Assuming direction of the Hungarian Communist Party, the so-called "Muscovites" promptly began undermining the "old order" by double-barreled tactics of infiltration and terroristic intimidation. In the first two post-war elections of November 1945 and August 1947, before freedom of the ballot was extinguished, the Hungarian people overwhelmingly rejected communism, giving the party's candidates only 17 percent of the vote in 1945, and 22 percent in 1947. But these defeats, though eloquent testimony to the strength of popular resistance, only served to bring about a steady intensification of Communist subversive pressure.

The Strategy of Subversion

THE Communist strategy in the psychological sphere had two essential and complementary objectives: on the one hand, to isolate Hungary from the West and build up a feeling of hostility toward western democratic culture; and, on the other, to induce belief in the superiority of Soviet institutions and civilization. The keynote of this two-pronged cultural offensive was sounded as early as March 1946 by Jozsef Revai, chief party ideologist, in the daily party organ *Szabad Nep* (Free People):

Western civilization no longer has any constructive role to play in human culture, and those who stand for it stand for a lost cause; they will go down ingloriously with their unworthy ideal. The future of mankind lies in communism, the future of culture in Communist culture.[3]

[3] Quoted in Dunakurir (Danube Courier), radio-monitored news bulletin published in Paris, April 30, 1951.

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Hungarian Communist writers, more numerous than capable, worked feverishly to instill this anti-western, pro-Soviet line, winning some support from misguided fellow travelers. The great majority of non-Communist writers, however, steadfastly refused to be intimidated or bribed into abandoning their stand for free, democratic ideals and against Communist regimentation. Still, they were soon forced to recognize that they were fighting for a lost cause, not because of any Marxist-invented law of historical necessity but because Hungary, standing in the shadow of the Soviet Union, had no hope of successfully withstanding Communist encroachment.

The Communist campaign of cultural subversion proceeded hand in hand with the systematic undermining of Hungary's free political institutions. An important step in this campaign was the infiltration of the Writers' Union by loyal party subservients, who gradually gained complete control of the organization. The power to grant or deny admission to union membership meant virtual control over who should be allowed to pursue a literary career; and the criteria naturally were not literary talent and achievement, but acceptance of communism and ready obedience to party directives.

An even more potent weapon of "persuasion" was acquired by the party through the establishment of dominant Communist influence within the Cultural Policy Division of the Prime Minister's Office. Through this agency, the party was able to control allocations of paper to publishers and thus could exert almost irresistible pressure upon them to print only what was acceptable to the Communists.

Despite these highly effective weapons, the party was unable to stamp out all vestiges of literary freedom until its political conquest of the state was completed in mid-1948. This was evident from a sharp warning addressed to recalcitrant publishers in April 1948 by the party newspaper, *Szabad Nep*, which called it "both foolish and dangerous to publish books by writers whose loyalty to the people is not beyond doubt." [4] "Loyalty to the people" meant, of course, loyalty to communism.

With the consolidation of the party's political dictatorship, its earlier tactics of subtle intimidation in the cultural sphere were supplanted by open terror and suppression. The regime proclaimed its policy to be the establishment of "proletarian hegemony" in culture and proceeded to implement it at an even more forced pace, in some respects, than the communization of the Hungarian economy.

[4] *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), April 18, 1948.

Literary purges followed, in the course of which non-Communist writers belonging to the Writers' Union were, with few exceptions, ousted and silenced. Blacklists were drawn up banning the works of hundreds of Hungarian and foreign non-Communist authors, and party squads went out and confiscated quantities of proscribed books from libraries and bookstores. So thorough was the campaign of suppression that Minister of Public Education Jozsef Darvas, in a report delivered at the 1951 Writers' Conference, was able to boast:

Under the guidance of the party, all bourgeois trends have been squeezed out of our rejuvenated literature and their place triumphantly occupied by socialist realism. [5]

In the same vein, Jozsef Revai, who had become Minister of People's Culture in the Communist regime, declared exultantly:

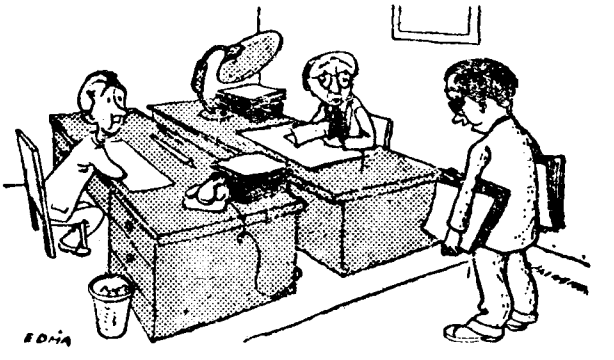
Thanks to the relentless efforts of the party. . . . Hungarian literature is now alive with Communist partisanship; in fact, it is a party literature which realizes the cultural hegemony of the proletariat. [6]

Love vs. Class Struggle

THESE statements were undoubtedly somewhat over-enthusiastic, but there was no question about the party's complete control over literary activity. It was a bleak period which produced almost nothing of merit but which did give rise to much protracted, sterile debate on what subjects the

[5] *Csillag*, Vol. IV, No. 5, May 1951.
[6] *Ibid.*

Példázat az írói „őszinteségről"



— Elhoztam a kéziratomat, ez az optimista, ez pedig a pesszimista változat, nem tudom, melyik most az aktuális . . .

Caption above: Example of the Author's "Sincerity"

Caption below: I brought my manuscript; this one is the optimistic and this one is the pessimistic version, but I don't know which is timely now . . .

From *Ludas Matyi*, March 7, 1955.

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good Communist writer should write about and how he should deal with them according to the rules of socialist realism. In the oppressive and embittered atmosphere engendered by this debate, personal rivalries became "conflicts of basic principle" and writers indiscriminately accused of "schematism," "attempted revival of bourgeois decadence" and other forms of literary "deviationism" became victims of party persecution.

Under the aegis of the "new socialist criticism", such time-honored literary themes as love and religious faith were virtually tabooed or ridiculed into desuetude. "Love," declared Revai, "cannot take the place of the class struggle!"[7] Instead, the "New Soviet Man," "socialist work" and "socialist heroes," among others, became the prescribed and almost compulsory subjects for writers to deal with—if not by party edict, then by the example of overzealous literary Stakhanovites and through fear of the consequences of failing to keep pace with them.

The stereotyped figure of the loyal, zealous party official became the hero in innumerable pieces of the new fiction. The girl idealized in lyric poetry was no longer soft and romantically alluring, but almost invariably driving a tractor on a *kolkhoz*. Although Revai assured the 1951 Writers' Conference that "Marxist literature is by no means devoid of human sentiments," such sentiments were admissible only if they conformed to certain party criteria. On the "positive" side, they must express love and admiration for the party and its leaders, for the Soviet Union, and for communism in general; on the "negative" side, hatred and contempt for the United States, for western bourgeois democracy, for capitalism and its "hirelings and spies."

Adulation of the Soviet Union as the model to follow in all spheres was the order of the day. In the field of literature, this was expressed in typically self-debasing terms by Education Minister Darvas following a visit to Moscow early in 1951. Wrote Darvas in the monthly literary review *Csillag* (Star):

> **We [Hungarian writers] stand agape in silent awe before the magnificence of Russian civilization and Soviet culture. . . . We cannot as yet create such [literary] heroes as can Soviet writers because our socialist development lags far behind Soviet life and literature. But we pledge ourselves to learn from our great Soviet friends, and to try to emulate them.[8]**

Such humiliating statements as Darvas' must have rankled even in the minds of many Hungarian writers who had—sincerely or otherwise—espoused communism. At any rate, they showed remarkable alacrity in endeavoring to regain some measure of literary freedom when the "New Course," inaugurated in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, produced immediate and sharp repercussions in Hungary.

The changes inspired by the reorientation in Moscow were outwardly sweeping, affecting not only policy but party and government personnel at all levels. In July 1953 Matyas Rakosi, the country's No. 1 Communist, relinquished the premiership in favor of Imre Nagy. The new premier promptly overhauled the regime's economic policies, steering them away from the forced industrialization and agricultural collectivization of the Stalinist period. In the cultural sphere, the regime showed signs of tolerating a greater measure of freedom, with more stress on native Hungarian culture than on mere aping of the Soviet model. Still, beneath this liberalized "new look", the basic policies and principles of the Communist regime remained unchanged.[9]

The literary "new course" was ushered in by a sudden rash of articles in *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Literary Journal), the weekly organ of the Writers' Union, and in *Csillag*, voicing unusually sharp and frank criticism of the state of Hungarian literature. *Irodalmi Ujsag*, in a plain admission of the failure of "partisanship" in literature, condemned writers whose slavish subservience to the party line had led them to produce works "not interesting enough to satisfy the public" even though they might satisfy some literary authority. Works previously praised in the same journal as "promising steps toward socialist realism" were now decried as "mortally dull and hopelessly gray." Demands for a "new spirit" in literature were voiced loudly and openly.[10]

Respite and Reaction

THE lowering of the barriers which these outbursts signified evoked a swift and well-nigh universal response in the Hungarian literary world. Writers who had hitherto hewed religiously to the hidebound tenets of socialist realism became bolder both in tone and in choice of themes. Revai's 1952 admonition against love was forgotten, and poets like Peter Kuczka and Laszlo Benjamin once more dared make romance—without political implications—a subject of their verse. There was a similar de-emphasis of the party line in the novels and short stories of such writers as Tibor Dery, Tamas Aczel and Aron Tamasi.

[7] *Tarsadalmi Szemle* (Social Review), Budapest, September 1952.
[8] *Csillag*, Vol. IV, No. 2, February 1952.
[9] See G. E. R. Gedye, "The New Course in Hungary: Promise and Performance," Problems of Communism, No. 6, November-December 1954.
[10] *Irodalmi Ujsag*, August 1, 1953.

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Some formerly doctrinaire Communists, like poet Lajos Konya and novelist Ferenc Karinthy, even criticized their own earlier work as "falsely optimistic," "sham" and "unconvincing." [11]

Another sign of the "thaw" was the re-emergence from long-enforced obscurity of non-Communist and even outspoken anti-Communist literary figures, among them the veteran Socialist poet Lajos Kassak, novelist Laszlo Nemeth and peasant poet Jozsef Erdelyi.[12] Simultaneously, the works of many of the 600-odd writers black-listed by the regime since January 1951 reappeared on bookstore shelves, some recovered from dusty stockrooms, others newly reprinted. These included even books by Ferenc Molnar, formerly denounced by the party as the prototype of "bourgeois decadence" and "cosmopolitanism." [13] Resurrected works of renowned older authors were reinterpreted as "precursors of Communist literature" and part of Hungary's "progressive literary tradition."

It was not long, however, before the very exuberance of the new liberal spirit began to frighten the regime. Some writers interpreted the relaxation as a green light to paint a more realistic picture of rural discontent, resistance to the regime, and unpalatable conditions generally—so much so that Karinthy, in the same article in which he acknowledged the over-propagandistic nature of his own work, warned that the more realistic writers were "actually sounding the death knell for the [Hungarian] People's Democracy." [14]

The party evidently came to the same conclusion, for on March 15, 1954 *Szabad Nep* published a stern warning that the party would be quick to put a stop to any "abuse or overstepping of literary freedom by enemies of the people and their irresponsible dupes." Violently attacking writers "whose criticisms . . . had degenerated into hostile agitation against the people, state and party itself," the paper laid down a long list of rules the general effect of which was to reaffirm that, the "new course" notwithstanding, literature must remain subservient to the party and to Communist ideology.[15]

[11] Lajos Konya, in *Irodalmi Ujsag* (Budapest), October 24, 1953; Ferenc Karinthy, in *Csillag*, December 1953.

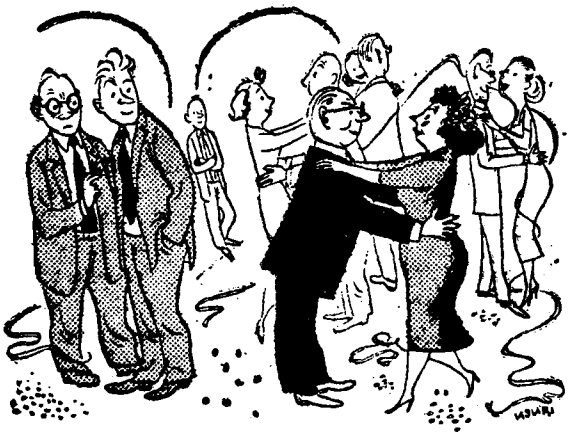
[12] Erdelyi, a notorious pro-Nazi, was imprisoned after the war as a collaborationist.

[13] Also the works of famous poet Dezso Kosztolanyi, modern romanticist Gyula Krudy, and Laszlo Nemeth.

[14] *Csillag*, December 1953.

[15] The party directive, *inter alia*, called for "relentless war . . . against decadence and pessimism, unprincipled literary activities and all forms of bourgeois revisionism." It further declared that "literature, instead of passively supporting our political system, must be actively partisan" and "no deviation will be tolerated."

BÁL AZ ÍRÓSZÖVETSÉGBEN



— Nézd, milyen jól csárdásozik az a kartárs . . .
— Megszokta. Kritikus. Kettőt jobbra, kettőt balra . . .

Caption above: ***The Writers Guild Ball***
Caption below: **—See how well the comrade dances . . .**
—He's used to it. He's a critic. Two steps to the right, two steps to the left.

—From *Ludas Matyi*, March 10, 1955.

This move to retighten the regime's cultural controls—paralleled in the political sphere by the resurgence of the dominant influence of Rakosi and his Stalinist "old guard"—obliged Hungarian writers to practice the "new course" with greater caution, but it could not end their awakened appetite for greater literary freedom. Critics shifted their attacks from the general to the specific—to schematism, bureaucracy in cultural leadership, and mechanical copying of the Soviet cliché in literature. The tendency toward more individualistic writing and greater emphasis on the human rather than political aspects of life continued. On the other hand, the party still had its blindly intransigent defenders of socialist realism, and there was an ever-widening rift between them and the writers who voiced cautious hopes for a gradual restoration of literary freedom. The regime watched the controversy with mounting discomfiture throughout 1954. Finally, in the spring of 1955, there were signs of a new party-inspired offensive against literary "deviationism."

Prelude to Revolt

THE opening volley was fired on March 22, 1955, at a policy meeting of the Writers' Union leadership, with high government and party officials participating. Communist writer Lajos Tamasi, after extolling the party directive of March 1954, declared that "in a proletarian dictatorship the party is the

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sole directing authority, and literature, too, is subordinated to the party's general policy." He went on to denounce in vigorous terms writers who contended that "literary activity must not be disturbed by party or state interference"; and other Communist spokesmen inveighed against "right-wing deviationists" and similar offenders.[16] At a further meeting of the union leadership in June 1955, First Secretary Sandor Erdei pointed to "conspicuous errors and mistakes in literary life," laying the blame for this on "insufficient ideological activities." [17]

Instead of silencing the allegedly misguided writers, these admonitions stirred them into new expressions of discontent. First, Peter Veres, a non-Communist author but one hitherto regarded with favor by the regime, openly encouraged young writers—in the columns of *Irodalmi Ujsag*—to choose their own paths to literary self-realization as this was "the only chance to build up the literature of tomorrow." [18]

Then, Tibor Dery, a well-known Communist writer, surprisingly seconded Veres' plea. He demanded "more freedom" and the "right to err" for young writers, condemning those "who would make little use of such freedom." Like Veres, he urged authors "to be true to themselves," implying that this was preferable to slavish parroting of the party line.[19]

Gyula Hay, veteran "Muscovite" writer, struck the next and most telling blow. In an article entitled "Freedom and Responsibility," he declared that the very existence of socialist literature depended upon "the success of unified efforts to remove those obstacles of a bureaucratic or administrative nature which . . . curtail literary freedom and hamper creative work." Because of these obstacles (clearly synonymous with party controls), Hay complained, "our writings more often reflect, not the writers' individual ideas, but state pronouncements almost official in character." [20]

The defection of a party stalwart like Hay to the "liberal" camp was too flagrant to be passed over in silence. Writing in *Csillag*, the faithful Communist author, Istvan Herman, accused Hay, Dery, Veres and others of covering up for a tendency to rally to "a wrong cause." While it was proper to attack schematism or shortsightedness in literature, he added, it was entirely wrong "to join forces with bourgeois decadence in so doing, for such an attitude threatens to sever literature . . . from Marxist philosophy and from the party." [21]

In October 1955 an even stronger blast came from *Szabad Nep*. The official party organ, in an editorial headed "Roads and Blind Alleys," savagely attacked every writer who had shown signs of having "slipped . . . off the firm ground of party loyalty in which he previously seemed to have taken root." Along with Veres, Hay and Dery, Communist poets Peter Kuczka and Laszlo Benjamin, Stalin Prize novelist Tamas Aczel, and others were flatly accused of trying "to induce writers to shake off the party's influence." [22]

The climactic act of the battle of words was not long in coming. At a closed meeting of the Writers' Union on November 10, the forces of literary discontent fused together in a concerted revolt which shook the party to its foundations and compelled it to lay down the law more emphatically than at any time since the inauguration of the "new course." These significant developments only came to light one month later with the publication, on December 10, of a formal resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' (Communist) Party.[23]

People's Democracy "Threatened"

THE Central Committee resolution, in its first section, detailed the party's charges against the rebellious writers. During the past two years, it stated, they "have forgotten to serve the people and ignored the fact that . . . such service was possible only through strict adherence to the aims of the party." Their criticisms had "degenerated into bourgeois distortions of the new [Communist] life," and had made them "spokesmen for the most backward and fading strata." In short, they were guilty of providing a "literary cloak for political attacks directed essentially against the People's Democracy."

The resolution then bared the startling developments at the November 10 conference:

Some writers staged a demonstration against the party and the People's Democracy and . . . used the occasion to parrot bourgeois slanders about the situation and the living standards of the workers and peasants. Under the pretext of criticism, they resorted to a hostile tone against leading party and state authorities and denied the necessity and justness of party guidance in literature.

Specifically, the resolution disclosed, Tibor Dery, Zoltan Zelk, Tamas Aczel and others had put forward a joint memorandum protesting against political and cultural measures taken by the party Central Commit-

[16] Reported in *Irodalmi Ujsag*, March 26, 1955.
[17] Reported in *Irodalmi Ujsag*, June 11, 1955.
[18] Peter Veres, "The Old and the Young," *Irodalmi Ujsag*, July 30, 1955.
[19] Tibor Dery, "Meditation on Youth," *Irodalmi Ujsag*, August 27, 1955.
[20] *Irodalmi Ujsag*, September 10, 1955.
[21] *Csillag*, September 1955.
[22] *Szabad Nep*, October 23, 1955.
[23] Published on front page of *Irodalmi Ujsag*, December 10, 1955.

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tee to implement the March 1954 decree. In addition to this clearcut atttack on the party leadership, Gyula Hay, Tibor Meray and their supporters had assailed party and state guidance of literature in the name of literary freedom. Finally, some party-designated members of the Writer's Union leadership had "demonstratively resigned, thus violating the elementary rules of party discipline."

The second part of the resolution, after declaring that "right-wing opportunism has appeared in its most dangerous, overt and organized form in literary life," went on to outline the measures to be taken by the party in order to liquidate this menace and prevent its recurrence. In summary, they were as follows:

1) Ideological, political and general party work must be fundamentally improved in the ranks of Communist writers.

2) Tainted political views suggested by the "enemy" must be combatted and an ideological counter-offensive launched against "petty-bourgeois mentality."

3) The level of literary criticism must be raised and support given to works dealing with the life of workers and peasants in such manner as to encourage the people to new and greater successes in building socialism.

4) All obnoxious views weakening party discipline in the Writers' Union must be liquidated, and the union authorities must subject the whole affair of the writers' anti-party agitation to investigation.

5) For its part, the party Central Committee, with the collaboration of both Communist and non-Communist writers, must solve topical problems of party guidance in literature and promote the further development of socialist realism. It must unite the party in support of the writers' efforts to combat "rightist mistakes" and fulfill "their great task, which is to develop a Communist partisan literature in the service of the people and of socialism."

Aftermath and Prospects

SUCH, then, was the Hungarian writers' bid for greater freedom, and such its unhappy outcome. Instead of winning a broader liberalization as its authors hoped, it brought retaliation and a move back toward "pre-new course" rigidity—a virtual admission that the regime views freedom as a menace to the very foundations of Communist power. If it is not dead in Hungary, the literary "new course" is but an emaciated shadow.

True, the regime manifested a certain leniency toward the wayward writers—for, in the Stalinist era, the charges against them might well have brought harsh penalties. By contrast, following the November 10 revolt, there were gestures by some Communist writers and even by a government spokesman evidently intended to soften the party's condemnation of the rebels. Thus, "Muscovite" Bela Illes wrote that they had erred gravely but "certainly are not our enemies," and Education Minister Darvas pointed magnanimously to "extenuating circumstances." [24]

But the regime's leniency toward the writers did not lessen the uncompromising nature of its reaffirmation of the party's dictatorial power over literature. The Central Committee resolution had its prompt and obedient echo in action by the Writers' Union and other literary groups condemning the "anti-party demonstration" (the word "revolt" was sedulously avoided), bourgeois and petty-bourgeois trends in culture, rightist deviationism and opportunism, etc.

It would obviously be as erroneous to overestimate as to underestimate the importance of the literary revolt. The rebels protested against party regimentation of cultural activity, but they did not—or dared not—attack communism itself. Yet, regimentation is so inextricably a part of the whole Communist system and philosophy that, to some degree at least, a protest against the former automatically implies one against the latter.

The greatest significance of the revolt lay in the fact that it developed into an organized movement in which the most renowned Hungarian Communist writers joined forces with some of the best non-Communist literary figures. In resorting to suppression, the regime has not solved the problem posed by the writers' aspirations toward greater freedom; it has only aggravated it. These aspirations may once again be muzzled for the present, but it is safe to say that the last has not been heard from what Horace termed the "sensitive race of poets" either in Hungary or anywhere else in the Communist world.

[24] Bela Illes in *Irodalmi Ujsag*, November 26, 1955; Darvas statement published in *Szabad Nep*, December 11, 1955.

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Literary Ferment in Bulgaria

By STEFAN MARINOFF

ON February 2, 1956, Radio Sofia, the official voice of the Bulgarian Communist regime, belatedly broadcasted to its listeners the text of a hitherto unreported but highly significant speech which Premier Vulko Chervenkov (since demoted as head of the government) had delivered five weeks earlier (December 28, 1955) at a closed conference of the Communist Party group within the Bulgarian Writers' Union.[1] The speech simultaneously made its first appearance in print in the weekly organ of the Writers' Union, *Literaturen Front*, and also was publicized in other principal party organs over the next two days.

While the regime's motives in suddenly baring a pronouncement which it had kept under wraps for more than a month were obscure, the importance of Chervenkov's speech itself was abundantly plain. First, it lifted the lid on the development, among hitherto loyal Bulgarian Communist writers, of mounting opposition to party shackles on literary freedom. Such opposition had found spasmodic voice in published articles during 1955, and had been tolerated by the regime; but at the December writers' conference it had—according to Chervenkov—assumed the proportions of a virtual anti-party revolt.

Second, in the face of this challenge, Chervenkov's speech bluntly warned that "petty bourgeois tendencies against the party line in literature must be strangled in the embryonic stage" and that any attempt at undermining, under the guise of "freedom to criticize," "the tested party principles of literary guidance by the Central Committee of the party" would not be tolerated. In short, the pronouncement served notice that the Bulgarian extension of the Moscow-originated "thaw" in literature will henceforth be kept strictly within bounds of innocuity.

[1] On April 8 the BCP Central Committee issued a statement condemning the "cult of the individual" built up "around the person of Comrade Vulko Chervenkov." Chervenkov resigned as premier April 16 and was replaced by Anton Yugov, former first deputy premier. Chervenkov remains a deputy premier.

Mr. Marinoff, a Bulgarian expatriate presently residing in Munich, is a journalist and frequent writer on Communist affairs for German, Austrian and Swiss newspapers.

It is noteworthy and certainly not purely coincidental, that the eruption of discontent at the December conference came almost on the heels of a similar rebellion against party domination of literature in Bulgaria's fellow satellite, Hungary. Except for the fact that the Bulgarian affair was lent added weight by the direct, personal intervention of the chief of state, the essential elements and outcome of the two controversies were the same.[2]

The Assault on Literary Dictatorship

A common feature of both revolts was the launching by the rebels of a concerted attack on the leadership of the Writers' Union, the main instrument of party control in the literary sphere. At the December conference, Chervenkov's speech revealed, the Bulgarian insurgents had charged the union leadership, headed by Secretary General Khristo Radevski, not only with dictatorial conduct but with total incompetence. Ivan Rudnikov, Ivan Martinov and Ivan Burin, among others specifically named by Chervenkov, had decried these failings as the main cause of the unsatisfactory development of Bulgarian literature and had dared to demand the removal of the entire union leadership because it had accomplished nothing whatever of a positive nature.

Behind the facade of these attacks Chervenkov discerned an insidious attempt on the part of the insurgents to "weaken the party positions in literature and its leadership of the Writers' Union." Indeed, he declared, Rudnikov had had the impudence to accuse the party Central Committee itself of "bureaucratic direction" of the union, while Srebrov, another recalcitrant had dared assert that the Central Committee "meddled too much" in literature.

Chervenkov voiced particular displeasure at the fact that, when these "slanderous" accusations were made, none of the Communist writers present at the conference had protested or demanded that the authors back up their allegations with proof. On the contrary, judging by the applause which had greeted

[2] See Ferenc Kormendi's article dealing with the Hungarian writer's revolt elsewhere in this issue.

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some of the charges, it appeared that many of those present approved and supported such anti-party views.

The proceedings, Chervenkov continued, could not be defended—as some writers had attempted—on the grounds of "freedom to criticize," for they smacked more of an attempt to introduce "unhealthy moods and tendencies whispered by forces of darkness" than of concern for worthwhile criticism. He went on:

The Communist Party does not favor any kind of criticism. To its way of thinking, freedom is not an absolute concept, as the anarchists conceive it to be, which does not take account of reality. There is no absolute freedom. Freedom, like everything else, must be presented concretely and in a definite frame of reference. We Communists view the world from the standpoint of the working class. What benefits that class and promotes its triumph is right and we support it; what obstructs the working class we reject. We are for criticism which strengthens us; we are against criticism which seeks to undermine us.

The indiscriminate attacks made at the conference, declared Chervenkov, were clearly opposed to the party's concept of "creative criticism." This was particularly evident since the attackers had used the union leadership only as a "practice target" while aiming their real shafts "higher up—in fact, at the Central Committee of the party." Thus, for example, Rudnikov—who drew the premier's heaviest and most frequent fire—had charged that Secretary General Radevski was "surrounded by enemies." Since Radevski's entourage embraced the Central Committee, it required little intelligence to see that Rudnikov was attacking the party leadership. Continued Chervenkov:

Are we to stand by and tolerate this in the name of freedom of criticism? No, comrades! Such freedom of criticism we do not recognize. . . . We are now forced to resist the petty bourgeois views which have infiltrated into the union; our resistance must be decisive.

Although Chervenkov assured the conference that "resistance" did not mean "choking off the comrades who here . . . expressed unhealthy tendencies," his reference in the very next paragraph to Nikola Petkov, Bulgarian agrarian leader tried and executed by the Communists in 1947, had a clearly ominous ring. Petkov, he recalled, had voiced criticisms which contained some grains of truth but which could not be tolerated because they were intended to undermine "the foundations of our regime." Rudnikov's criticism likewise contained grains of truth, but how—asked Chervenkov—"can we accept it when it is advanced under harmful slogans and undermines the foundations of party discipline?"

The Party Pall on Literature

TURNING his attention to developments prior to the December conference, Chervenkov vigorously condemned two other Communist writers who had used the columns of the union organ, *Literaturen Front*, to give vent publicly to "entirely unacceptable" and "erroneous" views. The first of these authors was Pavel Vezhinov, a member of the union leadership, who had also reiterated his opinions at the conference, thus furnishing ammunition to the Rudnikov group.

According to Chervenkov, Vezhinov's article in *Literaturen Front* had alleged that in practice Bulgarian writers enjoy no creative freedom nor right to make literary experiments, and that this was one of the main causes for the decline of Bulgarian literature. In Vezhinov's view, the works of contemporary Bulgarian writers resembled one another like so many eggs; the author's creative impulses had been stifled and a deadly uniformity had seized literature, resulting

Caption above: **Book learning, that mighty power.**
Caption below: **Whose fault is it?**

—From *Literaturen Front*, Sofia, January 14, 1954.

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in stagnation. Chervenkov then quoted verbatim from the article:

The writer is beginning to lose faith in his ideas, his literary values and artistic methods. Thereby he is losing his style, his creative individuality and independence. . . . I can see this process going on within myself. . . . I have lost much of my writer's individuality . . . and in exactly the same way the differentiating characteristics of my colleagues are fading. Somehow all of us, without noticing it, have become lost in a gray, impersonal mass.[3]

But, asked Chervenkov rhetorically, who was responsible for such shortcomings, if not the writers themselves? No one had forbidden Vezhinov to write according to the dictates of his heart; no one had instructed him how to write, for the party "is against such tutorship and regimentation and fights them with all its force." Chervenkov's next words, however, were most revealing:

Obviously he [Vezhinov] is being devoured by some kind of mistrust as to the rightness of our cause. Or maybe it is hesitation or doubt . . . that is what his troubles come from. That is where the hesitations of other writers without a solid Marxist-Leninist ideology stem from.

The "creative freedom" demanded by Vezhinov, the premier continued, could become a mask for the infiltration of "formalism and other forms of decadent bourgeois art." And even if Vezhinov himself did not mean to ask for removal of party control over literature, his conclusions were obviously "pleasing to those who do want it."

Chervenkov went on to voice agreement with Secretary General Radevski's view that complaints about a lack of creative freedom for writers stemmed from "misunderstanding" and a tendency "to confuse propaganda shortcomings with party policy."[4] Literature could not develop independently of the general party line and party propaganda, but various literary organs often took a narrow view of propaganda requirements and sought to restrict literary activity to guidelines which they conceived of as party directives. This led to a tendency among writers to gloss over unpleasant facts, to avoid tackling the shady aspects of reality and shun controversial subjects. Such distortion or schematic representation of reality, however, could not be laid at the door of the party, but was the result of a false interpretation of party directives.

Despite this protestation of party liberality, Chervenkov proceeded in the next breath to launch a vitriolic attack on another writer, Gotcho Gochev, who had published an article in *Literaturen Front* emphasizing the writer's function as a critic of the negative phenomena of socialist reality.[5] Denouncing the article as a "panegyric on the role of the writer as an exposer only of that which is negative in life," Chervenkov asserted that, according to Gochev, the writer would supplant the party as the conscience of the people. As an example of Gochev's negative approach, he cited the following passage:

When I see the gigantic reservoirs which irrigate the fields, when I see the hundreds of drills boring deep into the earth, I understand why we are still lacking in everything, why our people suffer from privation. I hear the grumbling of the people and understand why they have to tighten their belts so that they may have a better tomorrow.

Chervenkov denounced Gochev's reference to privation as a misrepresentation of fact on the highly dubious ground that only 20 percent of the national income was being allocated for capital investment and the remaining 80 percent for current expenditure.[6] But worse than this, he added, was Gochev's allusion to popular discontent:

Where did Comrade Gochev get the notion that the people are grumbling against the policy of the party? With what right does he, the Communist critic, appeal to writers to depict this grumbling in their works?

The writer of socialist realism, declared Chervenkov, must be an active fighter in the building of socialism. He cannot fulfill this role if he opposes the party spirit in art and literature. Real artistic creativeness can be achieved only "when based on the party line and on a Marxist-Leninist outlook which has been well assimilated. We want a truthful and artful recreation of our reality which will serve as a militant weapon in the struggle for communism."

The contradiction evident in this last statement emerged even more blatantly in Chervenkov's concluding remarks. On the one hand, he declared:

The party spirit in literature has nothing in common with dogmas, schemas and canons; it is organically linked with the greatest creative freedom.

And:

The party has never laid down any prescriptions for the artistic creations of writers; it has never exercised supervision over creative minds or subjected them to control.

[3] Vezhinov's article appeared under the title, "About the Creative Freedom of the Writer," *Literaturen Front*, April 7, 1955.

[4] Radevski had taken this line in an article published in *Literaturen Front*, September 15, 1955.

[5] Gochev, "The Writer as an Active Social Builder," *Literaturen Front*, September 15, 1955.

[6] These figures represent the planned allocations under the State Plan for 1956, as announced by Vice-Premier Georgi Chankov on December 13, 1955 (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, December 14, 1955). They indicate only a slight reduction in the proportion of national income to be spent for capital investment of all kinds, including both industry and agriculture, as compared with 1955.

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On the other hand:

Communist writers must be united on matters of the Communist line in literature. They must also be united in applying party decisions in literature. . . . We are not a group of free thinkers; we are a militant group of uniform thinkers.

Sidelights

OF considerable interest in connection with the turbulent developments revealed by Chervenkov's speech was the publication in January, in the Belgrade newspaper *Politika*, of a commentary by the Yugoslav writer, Dushan Kostich, on the current state of Bulgarian literature.[7] Kostich had recently returned from a two-week visit to Sofia with a delegation of Yugoslav writers, and his views showed the impact of conversations he had had with some of the Bulgarian writers denounced shortly thereafter by Chervenkov at the December conference—notably, Pavel Vezhinov.

Kostich complimented the good work of several individual writers such as Dimiter Dimov, Dimiter Talev and Emilian Stanev, but in general he viewed Bulgarian literature as suffering from stagnation, lack of color, uniformity and schematism. Citing statements by Vezhinov and others not specifically named, he ascribed this deterioration to the fact that intellectual freedom was lacking in the Bulgarian People's Republic and that the party apparatus exercised too rigid a control over literary activity. As a result, there was a loss of creative individuality, and the "positive heroes" in contemporary Bulgarian literature were drawn according to a uniform pattern which made individual profiling impossible.

This leaking-out of the views of the dissatisfied Bulgarian Communist writers in the press of neighboring Yugoslavia very probably was a factor which influenced the decision in Sofia to give belated publicity to Chervenkov's harsh and blunt declarations at the December conference.

In view of these declarations, coupled with the signs of a parallel retreat in Hungary away from the slight liberalization which seemed to be getting started in 1955, it would appear that the "thaw" in Communist literature and cultural activity, so far as these two satellites are concerned, has had a short and not too happy life.

The import of the reversal is plain: The writer's cry for greater freedom is inevitably construed as an attack on the party. For, under communism, literature's only role is to serve as a vehicle of party propaganda. Away, then, with the fleeting illusion that the Communist writer can ever aspire to real freedom of intellectual creation.

As an illustrative footnote to what the Communist concept of creative freedom, reaffirmed by Chervenkov, means in practice, and to the sometimes devious ways in which it is enforced upon the writer, the case of Dimiter Dimov, most gifted of Bulgaria's younger authors, is still enlightening despite the lapse of two years since its culmination.

In 1951 Dimov published his second novel, *Tyutyun* (Tobacco), a story centering around the conflicts between two brothers, one of whom becomes a great tobacco tycoon and the other a Communist partisan leader in wartime Bulgaria. A work distinguished by genuine realism and unusual artistic power, it was an immediate success. The first edition was quickly sold out, and Dimov was rewarded with the Dimitrov prize for 1951.

In the spring of 1952, however, *Literaturen Front* suddenly came out with an article condemning the entire book on the ground that its "negative" (non-Communist) characters were pictured in too sympathetic a light while the "positive" (Communist) figures in the story did not fare well enough.[8] This attack was curiously followed by a defense of Dimov's work in the official party daily, *Rabotnichesko Delo*, which in turn produced a quick change of tune by *Literaturen Front*.[9] The ludicrously transparent comedy which ensued showed that this was but window-dressing to demonstrate the party's respect for literary freedom.

The Communist press proceeded to publish a voluminous number of patently inspired "letters from readers" commenting on *Tyutyun*. Shock workers and *kolkhoz* farmers, taking *Rabotnichesko Delo's* defense of Dimov as their point of departure, penned warm praises of the artistic worth of his novel but at the same time suggested, with rather striking unanimity, that certain defects might well be eliminated in future editions. These defects bore close resemblance to those for which *Literaturen Front* had initially condemned *Tyutyun*.

It was now the author's turn. Dimov, in a published statement, expressed gratitude for the "well-

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[7] Dushan Kostich, "Razgovori u Sofiji" (Conversations in Sofia), *Politika*, Belgrade, issue for January 1–3 (published January 1, 1956), p. 12.

[8] Panteley Zarev, "Concerning Full Victory over Anti-realistic Influences," *Literaturen Front*, March 6, 1952.

[9] Editorial in *Rabotnichesko Delo*, March 1, 1952; Khristo Radevski, "About the State of Our Criticism," *Literaturen Front*, April 22, 1952.

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founded criticisms of the masses," which he would certainly take to heart. That he did so was fully apparent when, after the lapse of more than a year, the second edition of *Tyutyun* finally appeared in December 1953. Transformed according to the principles of "socialist realism," the book was scarcely recognizable.

The capitalist tobacco tycoon, who was the principal "negative" figure in Dimov's story, had been repainted in "more objective"—that is, darker—colors. The "positive heroes"—Communist partisan fighters and workers—displayed commendable traits of character far more conspicuously than before, and a half dozen new heroes had been added.[10] The individuality and verve of the original were gone. A brilliant novel had been reduced to a stereotyped, mediocre piece of party literature.

Such is the practical meaning and effect of the "freedom of creation" and "non-interference of the party in literature" so ingenuously boasted by Chervenkov in the same breath that he admonished the December writers' conference to toe the party line, or else. . . .

[10] The newly added "positive heroes" were workers, partisans or peasants and included a woman worker who rises to membership of the Central Committee of the BCP.

The Italian CP

Part II: The Road Toward a Dilemma, 1945-56

By GIORGIO GALLI

EVER since its re-emergence at the close of World War II, the PCI (Partito Communista Italiano) has consistently hewed to the tactical line laid down by its leader Secretary General Palmiro Togliatti, upon his return to Italy in April 1944. Under that line, the party has soft-pedalled, almost to the point of repudiation, its originally proclaimed role as the avant-garde of proletarian revolution in Italy. It has turned its back on its beginnings as a sect of insurrection-minded agitators and instead, except for a few fleeting lapses, behaved like an eminently respectable mass party seeking to make its influence felt in national affairs through the normal democratic processes of the ballot-box and parliamentary maneuver.

This tactic, which strives to create a broad block of "people's democratic forces" dedicated to promoting Soviet foreign policy objectives, is certainly nothing new in Communist practice and has been followed, in varying degrees, by all Communist parties in free world countries in the post-war period. But the PCI, under Togliatti, has pursued it further and with greater persistence than any of its counterparts.

There is no question that the Togliatti line has achieved a considerable measure of success in broadening the popular base of the PCI. In the June 1953 national elections, the party obtained over six million votes, almost two million more than it received in the first post-war elections of 1946. Moreover, in conjunction with its ally, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) under Nenni, the PCI won control of more than one-third of the seats in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, giving it easily the strongest strategic position of any European Communist Party outside the Soviet orbit.

But the moderate tactical line has had its minus side for the party, too. For the sake of gaining the support of the southern peasantry and disgruntled middle-class elements, the PCI leadership has been obliged to keep a firm brake on working class demands and action and to tone down its economic program. As a result there has been a significant decline in the party's influence and prestige among the industrial

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workers of northern Italy, who have constituted the backbone of the PCI since its birth in 1921.

At the same time, the party line appears to be losing its appeal for the southern peasants, one of its main targets. In the regional elections of June 1955 in Sicily, the Sicilian Communists lost rather than gained votes for the first time since 1948. This could portend that the PCI's attempt to straddle the fence and serve conflicting class interests, which already has weakened the party's grip on the industrial proletariat, is no longer achieving a compensatory expansion of the party base.

Post-War Orientation of the PCI

THE PCI's posture as it appeared immediately after the liberation in 1945 was that of "a mass party," predominantly proletarian, yet which allied itself with parties representing other social classes to establish a democratic, parliamentary type of republic. The basic concept of its new orientation had been succinctly stated by Togliatti at the April 1944 meeting of the PCI National Council in Naples:

We are no longer a sect of agitators but have assumed the responsibility of a great party.[1]

Accordingly, the party stifled any reiteration of long-term revolutionary objectives and called for a continuation of the "union of democratic forces" forged during the Resistance. The Fifth Party Congress, which met in January 1946, gave its full endorsement to this policy and set forth the PCI's proposals for revising the constitutional structure of the Italian state in these moderate terms: [2]

To declare the monarchy obsolete . . . and to determine that the Italian state shall be a democratic republic of physical and intellectual workers supported by a representative parliamentary regime in which the fundamental liberties of the citizen shall be guaranteed and defended.[3]

Quite apart from the theoretical questions which the PCI's post-war line poses from the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, its application in detailed party policies during the 1945–56 period has many interesting facets. One of the most important is the expression and consequences of this line in the vital area of the trade union struggle of the CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labor), which has been and remains the PCI's labor arm.

Early in 1946, the economic objectives of the PCI were defined in the following terms:

In the industrial field, the party proposes the nationalization of large monopolistic combines, big banks and insurance companies; the institution of national planning and of a system of national control of production, the first step in which will be the general establishment and recognition of management councils. In the agricultural field, the party proposes the liquidation of large landed estates, limitation of large capitalist ownership . . . and consequent protection of the small and average landowner.[4]

As these objectives indicated, the PCI leadership believed that what might be termed structural reforms were consistent with the maintenance of an economy of markets and private initiative—that is to say, they could be attained without complete expropriation of the capitalist class. The management councils were to become the pivot of initiative in industry. Professor Antonio Pesenti, a recognized Communist economist who for a time was Finance Minister and later headed the Labor Commission of the Constituent Assembly, defined their role in these terms:

The function of the management council must not be a class function, but a technical function for the improvement of production. . . . In order that these objectives may be achieved, it is desirable that representatives both of labor and of capital sit together on the management councils.[5]

Dual Control of Industry

THE PCI advocated the dual control principle, as set forth by Pesenti, for two reasons. The first was that it saw in the management councils an entering wedge toward achievement of its economic objectives. Second, in an Italy economically prostrated, it was forced to the realization that any move to accentuate class conflicts might prove a boomerang by imposing an obstacle to reconstruction and economic revival.

To tackle these problems successfully, it was essential that the forces of labor and capital be combined as effectively as possible. But naturally the solutions advanced by Italian labor organizations, then united in the CGIL as the sole national labor confederation, differed from those put forward by the employers.

The latter stressed the necessity of cutting back the over-expanded labor force, while the CGIL insisted just as vigorously that dismissals of surplus workers

[1] *Rinascita*, Rome, No. 3, 1944. (*Rinascita* is the monthly theoretical organ of the PCI.)

[2] The Fourth Congress was held in 1931 at Dusseldorf and Cologne.

[3] *La politica dei comunisti dal quinto al sesto congresso—risoluzioni e documenti raccolti a cura dell'ufficio di segreteria del Pci* (The Policy of the Communists from the Fifth to the Sixth Congress—Resolutions and Documents Assembled by the Secretariat of the PCI), pp. 6–14, *passim*. This official party record is henceforth referred to by the abbreviated title, *La politica*.

[4] *La politica*, p. 13. Until 1947 the PCI continued to put forward these objectives in its program offered as a basis for Communist participation in the government, but no government accepted them.

[5] Preface to *Il dibattito sui consigli di guestione* (The Debate on the Management Councils), a collection of studies by the Constituent Assembly. Picardi, Milan, 1946, pp. 5–6.

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by industry be stopped. In August 1946 the PCI stepped into the controversy in support of the CGIL, urging that the problem be solved "by increasing opportunities for employment and thus furthering the plans for [national] reconstruction." [6] The CGIL succeeded in obtaining a temporary suspension of dismissals. But the PCI's intervention failed to secure any real solution of basic differences through acceptance of the principle that workers as well as employers were entitled to a voice in deciding how and according to what criteria the productive factors which they represented should be combined.

Here lay the real point at issue. The CGIL kept on striving to realize the dual control principle through the establishment of management councils, but its efforts were unsuccessful. By the end of 1947, about half a year after the Communists had been expelled from the government, it was abundantly clear that the Italian economy was being reconstructed along the old lines of private initiative with the employers firmly in the saddle.[7] Togliatti's "great party," despite its increased size and strengthened organization, had clearly failed to advance the realization of its economic objectives—a failure which could not help but have serious repercussions among the industrial workers of the north.

Indeed, even the objectives fixed by the party in 1946 had been far too modest to satisfy these militant elements. This was explicitly recognized by the party leaders in an analysis of the June 1946 elections for the Constituent Assembly, which had revealed some weak spots in the northern provinces of Piedmont, Lombardy and Veneto.[8] The analysis said:

In these areas during the war of liberation, the masses participating in the struggle, who constituted the most aggressive section of the Italian people, set for themselves very advanced goals; however, in view of the conditions under which the political struggle was developing in Italy and the rest of Europe, these goals could not become the objectives of the entire people after the liberation.[9]

In other words, the PCI-led northern workers in 1945 had hoped for speedy attainment of a maximum socialist program, and when the party came out, after the liberation, for national alignment on the political plane and class collaboration in the economic sphere, large segments of the workers either were disgruntled or clung to the belief that the PCI's strategy was purely temporary and designed to be supplanted by revolutionary tactics as soon as a favorable opportunity arose. So widespread was this interpretation that Togliatti felt obliged to voice the following warning in a circular letter addressed to PCI provincial organizations in August 1946:

Whenever we delve into the minds of our comrades, we find the strangest conceptions of what communism should be, conceptions which are difficult to reconcile with our political line. Acceptance of this line [by party members] is often superficial or formal, or is justified by the same foolish characterizations as our opponents allege regarding us—"tactics," trickery, secret plans, and so forth.[10]

In view of this intransigeant sentiment deplored by Togliatti, it was only natural that the Communists' exclusion from the government and the subsequent stiffening of the employers' stand, as evidenced by abandonment of the PCI-sponsored plan for dual control of industry and by the carrying out of mass dismissals, evoked a typically strong reaction among the workers. At first the party leadership tried to minimize it, affirming in August 1947 that "only to a limited extent have there been deviationist manifestations." [11] But November found Togliatti impelled to voice a stronger caution "not to close our eyes to evidences of infantile and maximalist extremism . . . [and] tendencies to consider that there is no longer any other course but to fight." [12]

Even as he uttered his November warning, however, Togliatti found himself under pressure from another quarter—and one which he could not very well ignore—to inject a more aggressive note into PCI policy. At the secret conference of European Communist leaders held at Warsaw in September 1947 to establish the Cominform, Andrei Zhdanov, expositor of the new and more militant Moscow line, had vigorously condemned the French and Italian parties for their moderate, hesitant policies and demanded more aggressive revolutionary tactics. Togliatti, though opposed to the Zhdanov line, found it expedient to make some half-hearted gestures of compliance.

It was against this background that the PCI's policy entered a short-lived phase of greater militancy during the winter of 1947–48. Under orders from the party headquarters for a "campaign in the town squares," a series of coordinated riots took place in various urban centers in November. Shortly there-

[6] *La politica*, p. 97.

[7] This tendency became even more accentuated after the defeat of the Communist-led People's Democratic Front in the April 1948 election.

[8] These weak spots were exceptions to the generally strong showing of the PCI in the north, which sharply contrasted with its weakness in the south. The over-all election results gave the PCI and the Socialists together 40 percent of the vote and 219 seats in the Constituent Assembly (Socialists, 115; Communists, 104), while the Christian Democrats alone polled 35 percent of the vote and obtained 207 seats.

[9] *La politica*, p. 71.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 386.

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after, a joint Socialist-Communist general strike was carried out in Milan, involving seizure of the town hall, and a wave of strikes, rallies and mass demonstrations followed in other localities, principally in the north where the emphasis was on resistance to lay-offs occasioned by the industrial readjustment program.

None of these moves, however, was pressed with real determination by the party leadership. It was evident that Togliatti intended to keep a brake on the extremists in order not to prejudice the PCI's extensive political maneuver designed to broaden the party base by embracing middle-class elements and the southern peasantry.

PCI Recruiting Campaign

THE party's effort to extend its following had been stepped up following the Constituent Assembly elections of June 1946, in which the middle class and southern Italian vote had been heavily conservative. In July a special section was set up within the party leadership to direct work in southern Italy. This was followed in August by steps to intensify propaganda directed at overcoming the party's "separation from the middle classes."

Further action was taken on the heels of Communist exclusion from the government in May 1947. It was then decided to "launch another big recruiting campaign directed particularly toward the middle classes." In a report to the PCI Central Committee, Togliatti defined "the fundamental strategic objective" of the campaign as "the institution in our country of a system of progressive democracy . . . attainable only if we create and maintain a wide, solid block of people's democratic forces." [13]

Thus, the PCI strove to effectuate the mass party concept outlined by Togliatti upon his return from exile. With the advanced working class in the north as the pivot, efforts were made to bring under the party banner social categories which generally lacked any socialist tradition—the middle classes, the subproletariat, and the landless southern peasantry.

The parliamentary elections of April 18, 1948 provided an initial test of the worth of these tactics. The Communist-led People's Democratic Front, which embraced Nenni's PSI and some small leftist groups, obtained only a little more than 30 percent of the total vote, its support coming largely from the workers in northern and central Italy. By and large, the only middle class votes won by the PCI came from contract farmers and small landowners in Emilia, Tuscany and Umbria; neither the urban middle class (professional people, government employees and skilled workers) nor the predominantly agricultural population of the south was penetrated to any appreciable extent, and their vote was decisive in the sweeping victory of the Christian Democratic Party, which won 47 percent of the popular vote and an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

The election failure, however, did not lead the PCI high command to alter in any way its strategic directives envisaging a mass party embracing the middle class and peasants. This strategy, which dictated a continuing curb on extremist action by the working class component of the party, was implicitly reaffirmed by the critical events of July 1948.

The background against which these events transpired was one of increasing labor unrest in the north as a result of the election defeat. On July 14, as Togliatti was leaving parliament, he was seriously wounded by bullets from a revolver wielded by a Sicilian student of fascist leanings. News of the attempt evoked a loud and spontaneous outburst of protest, particularly in the north. The PCI daily organ *L'Unitá* came out in Milan the same afternoon with a banner headline, "Down with the Government of Assassins!" The CGIL issued immediate orders for a general strike, which was interpreted among the rank and file as a call for mass action to overthrow the government.

The response of the workers was violent. At the big Fiat works in Turin, all the executives were seized as hostages. In Genoa police armored cars were captured. In Milan, while the police remained inactive in their barracks, Communist activists disarmed the guards at plants where agitation was being carried on. In Tuscany local government offices were occupied.

The PCI leadership now had to make a quick decision whether or not to risk an all-out test of strength. It evidently considered the risk not worth the candle, for on July 15 word was passed down that the strike was not to be carried to extremes. The police and civil authorities regained control of the situation, and on July 16 the strike was called off.

Coming on top of the party's failure to achieve political power legally in the April elections, its inability or unwillingness to organize a sudden, smashing blow to win control by force in July had a decisive effect in depressing the fighting spirit of the Communist masses in the north. At the same time, the extremist political tinge apparent in the CGIL's action on July 14–15 touched off internal dissensions which had been building up for some time between the Communist-led majority and the Christian Democratic, Social Democratic and Republican minorities within the confedera-

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 273.

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ation. The latter now walked out of the CGIL, eventually setting up the rival CISL (predominantly Christian Democratic) in the fall of 1948 and UIL (mainly Social Democratic and Republican) in 1949. Unified Communist leadership of the Italian workers was at an end.

Thus, the events of 1948 demonstrated that the strategy of the PCI not only had failed, up to this point, to win any appreciable support from the middle classes and peasantry, but also was causing the party to lose influence and prestige among the workers. Despite this, as the July crisis clearly showed, the basic strategy of the PCI leadership remained unchanged. The northern industrial proletariat, which in the main continued to look to the party for leadership, still was the axis of this strategy, with tentacles reaching out to draw in the urban middle classes and poor southern peasantry.

Only the party's goal had been scaled down in view of the April election setback. It was no longer the achievement of "progressive democracy" through installation of a people's front government, but the more modest one of creating a big party of constitutional opposition.

Difficult Role of the CGIL

WHILE the PCI mobilized its organization and propaganda apparatus to press its campaign among the middle class elements and in the south, the CGIL was assigned the vital task of keeping intact the strategic axis of the whole operation—the advanced industrial proletariat. In line with overall PCI tactics, the CGIL directorate evolved a concept of working-class action dubbed "the opposition which rules." Under this concept the working class, by championing not only its own interests but the common interests of all social categories except big capital, would seek to organize an opposition so strong that neither the government nor employers could disregard it.

With regard to industry the CGIL renewed its efforts along the lines of the earlier PCI proposal for a joint management system. At its Genoa Congress in 1949, it launched a "Labor Plan" which envisaged a reorganization of the national economy based on cooperation between employers and workers. The former ignored the plan and went ahead with their own industrial readjustment program. The PCI and CGIL responded by accusing the government of favoring the employers' plans for "monopolistic concentration" of Italian industry, involving the disappearance of once-flourishing industries and causing chronic shortages of consumer goods. *Rinascita*, the theoretical organ of the PCI, declared:

The accentuation of the internal contradictions in our economy has posed for the working class not merely the problem of protecting and improving its way of life, but even of obtaining employment and opportunities for work. The resistance to lay-offs and the seizure of factories . . . are the first manifestations of the turning point in the battle of labor.[14]

Actually this last statement was an exaggeration. Although some rough fights took place, involving in one instance the death of six iron foundry workers at Modena in a clash with police, worker resistance and seizures of plants were not enough to prevent implementation of the readjustment plans of the factory managements. Needless to say, the CGIL's grandiose idea of forging the working class into an "opposition which governs" was equally unsuccessful. Both the CGIL as a whole and many of the more aggressive individual labor groups under its banner came out of the fight seriously weakened, either through the dispersion of some groups or through the tendency of the more highly skilled workers, less vulnerable to lay-offs, to become indifferent to union conflicts.

Although continuing to shout the standard formulas by way of propaganda, the CGIL began to fall back into labor unionism of the traditional type and increasingly centered its attention on demands that were no longer of a general or basic character, but specifically limited in scope, such as wage increases. In the fall of 1951 it launched a great national campaign for a 15-percent pay increase for industrial workers, calling this essential to boost the Italian economy to a higher level by "substantially increasing the purchasing power of the domestic market."[15]

The campaign, however, was conducted listlessly so far as strikes and agitation were concerned, for aggressive action ran directly counter to two basic directives of PCI policy: on the one hand, to attract the middle classes by playing down the class character of the party; on the other, to give all possible support to the foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union. The latter aim had assumed much greater importance in PCI strategy because of the stepped-up pace of the international cold war, Togliatti's letter to the Milan Federation in April 1951 testifying to this change:

The PCI is willing to withdraw its opposition, both in parliament and in the country, to any government which, by radically modifying Italian foreign policy, that is to

[14] Bruno Tretin, "Sorte e difesa dell'industria meccanica," (Prospects and Defense of the Engineering Industry), *Rinascita* July 1951, pp. 348–9.

[15] Vittorio Foa, "La questione dei salari" (The Question of Wages), *Rinascita*, October 1951, pp. 457–8.

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say, by causing Italy to withdraw from those commitments which are inevitably leading toward war, will prevent our country from being dragged into the vortex of a new conflict.[16]

As it affected the action of the CGIL, this policy of increased subservience to Soviet interests meant that nothing must be done to exacerbate relations with those management circles which were likely to exert their influence in favor of a neutralist foreign policy. As a result, labor union action in the factories was restricted to the relatively milder forms, such as slow-down strikes or walk-outs in just one section of the plant at a time. Such localized, watered-down action alternated with purely political agitation, for example the demonstrations organized on the occasion of the Italian visits of General Eisenhower, then NATO commander, in January 1951, and of his successor, General Ridgway, in May 1952.

By the summer of 1952, the CGIL campaign of limited demands had ended in complete frustration, even failing to secure any betterment of wages. This naturally caused the aggressive spirit of the workers to decline still further, but on the overall political front the PCI was able to gain increased support for its opposition policy by making capital of allegedly reactionary, anti-democratic tendencies on the part of the de Gasperi government.

PCI Advance in 1953 Elections

PARTICULARLY useful grist for the PCI propaganda mill was furnished by the so-called majority electoral law, which the four government parties pushed through parliament with a view to assuring a solid parliamentary majority for de Gasperi's centrist coalition in the upcoming elections of June 1953. The law provided that any coalition of parties obtaining one-half of the total votes plus one would automatically receive almost two-thirds of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies; if such a majority were not obtained, the usual rule of proportional representation would apply.

In the election campaign the PCI made this law the paramount issue, and the results of the balloting on June 7 revealed a marked upsurge in Communist strength. The PCI obtained over 6,000,000 votes (as compared with 4,360,000 in 1946 and roughly 5,000,000 in 1948); and the Communists and Nenni Socialists combined polled 35 percent of the votes, winning more than one-third of the seats in the Chamber. The Communist vote showed a significant increase among the southern peasants and in limited sectors of the middle class hostile to the government's policy. In the north, the PCI held its own generally, but there was a noteworthy though very slight decline in some of the big urban industrial centers.

Despite their big success at the polls, the PCI and PSI proved incapable of translating it into practical results in parliament. The Pella and Scelba governments continued, with only slight differences, the political line of the preceding centrist administration—uncompromising struggle against the leftist opposition.

While the political position of the PCI thus showed little real improvement, the trends that were already

[16] *L'Unità*, April 4, 1951.

Another Western Communist Corrects An "Error"

The Glorious Stalin . . .

Stalin—who has written golden pages in world history, whose lustre time can never efface. . . . Never the dictator, never to lay down the law, always eager and willing to listen, to understand another's point of view. . . . No words, no monuments, no tributes can ever do justice to the revolution in people's minds and actions, in changing world history, in freeing millions from darkness, oppression, poverty and misery that have been brought about by the work of Comrade Stalin. . . . Eternal glory to the memory of Joseph Stalin.

—Harry Pollitt, *London Daily Worker*, March 7, 1953.

. . . Was Really A Dictator

Stalin established, bit by bit, methods of personal leadership, and did not make provision . . . for proper functioning and collective leadership within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. More and more Stalin based himself on the theory of the intensification of the class struggle within the socialist state, even after complete victory over capitalists and landlords had been established. . . .

—Harry Pollitt, *London Daily Worker*, March 24, 1956.

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tending to bring about a crisis in the CGIL continued unabated. The employers, in an ever stronger position, intensified their anti-Communist pressure, imposing increasingly severe limitations upon the opportunities available to CGIL activists for agitation and propaganda.[17] The non-Communist labor organizations, favored by the employers' attitude and by the CGIL's failure to win positive results, steadily gained in strength at CGIL expense. Finally, the centrifugal force which tended to detach the more skilled workers from the CGIL was further accentuated as the major industrial combines, having completed their readjustment programs (at the cost of some "structural" unemployment), were at last able to grant pay increases to these categories.

The cumulative effect of these factors was decisively bolstered by the *conglobamento* (package wage increase) agreement which the General Confederation of Italian Industry concluded in June 1954 with the non-Communist CISL and UIL, and which granted at least a slight improvement in pay affecting some three million workers. The CGIL refused to sign the agreement but in the end was obliged to enter into separate agreements on the same terms.

This defeat was the culminating blow which caused the CGIL to lose thousands of votes in the shop-steward elections held during the winter and spring of 1954–55. The result was that the confederation was deprived of its majority position on the shop-steward committees of various important industrial combines in the north—Fiat in Turin, and Falck, Innocenti and Officine Meccaniche in Milan—which had always been Communist strongholds.[18]

Even after these setbacks, the CGIL still remains the most important Italian labor organization. On a national scale, it continues to control about 65 percent of the votes for the shop-steward committees and has millions of non-Communist members who see it only as an instrument of labor protection. But, left out in the cold by the joint initiatives of the plant managements and rival union organizations, the CGIL finds itself in an exceedingly uncomfortable situation. At Fiat, Ilva, Pirelli, Montecatini—that is to say, in the key sectors of the Italian economy—the plant managements have either concluded or are about to conclude separate agreements with the CISL and UIL. The CGIL, which in 1951 boasted of achieving "the greatest labor union unity ever attained in a capitalistic country," now faces serious competition.[19]

[17] These limitations were especially drastic following an agreement concluded in May 1955 with regard to the functioning of the shop-steward committees in industrial plants. Article 10 of the agreement made any contact between workers and members of the committees within the plants subject to authorization by the managements.

[18] This trend became less marked subsequently. For example, in the October 1954 elections at the Pirelli plant in Milan, the second largest Italian factory after Fiat, the CGIL retained its majority on the shop-steward committee, though by a reduced margin.

Loss of Faith in Communist Leadership

BASICALLY, the deteriorating position of the CGIL reflects a loss of faith among the Italian working class in the confederation's Communist leadership and in the overall political leadership of the PCI. Agostino Novella, one of the PCI's most dependable representatives in the CGIL, guardedly admitted as much in an analysis of the confederation's failures at its Executive Committee meeting in April 1955. He said:

A certain lack of confidence has penetrated some working class strata regarding the prospects for a definitive solution of their problems and of the basic problems of Italian society.[20]

Had Mr. Novella been willing to speak more frankly, he might have specified that the lack of confidence stemmed from a feeling that the PCI, with the CGIL as its labor arm, had failed not only to gain for the working class the political leadership or co-leadership of the country, but even to obtain any substantial improvement of its economic position.

This situation prompted the CGIL to make a serious reappraisal of its position and policies at its 4th Congress, which met in Rome from February 28 to March 4, 1956. The top confederation leaders frankly admitted that insufficient account had been taken of changes in the productive structure of Italian industry during recent years, and that both employers and the rival labor organizations had been able to strengthen their positions because of the CGIL's mistakes. But when it came to revising past policies so as to provide specific remedies for these mistakes, the Congress inevitably faced a tough problem because of the restricting necessity that its revisions fully accord with the basic political strategy of the PCI.

The Congress did nothing to disturb the party line. Its principal policy shift was a decision to conduct future agitational activities mainly at the company level, by plant or group of plants, using the same tactics already adopted some time ago by the CISL. The leaders, of course, denied that this meant being

[19] The 1951 boast was made by Giuseppe di Vittorio, Secretary General of the CGIL, in an article, "Verso il VII congresso del Partito" (Toward the Seventh Congress of the Party), *Rinascita*, March 1951, p. 125.

[20] As reported in *L'Unità*, April 30, 1955.

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"towed along" by the rival organization and stressed that, while the tactics were similar, the CGIL, unlike the CISL, would make "its point of reference the workers' working and living conditions, not the productivity or profit of the enterprise." [21]

This innocuous decision, though adopted, did not satisfy the more militant elements. Their spokesmen declared that the new tactics would only cause the CGIL's labor struggle to lose its edge; that the question of "struggles of greater duration must be considered" (Luciano Lama, Chemical Workers' Union); and that, instead of mere pinpricking, "much harsher actions are required, which will seriously hurt monopolistic interests" (Montagnana, secretary for Piedmont).[22] In his concluding speech, however, CGIL Secretary General di Vittorio carefully hedged on this crucial issue, declaring ambiguously that "strikes of all kinds and durations may be good . . . provided they are suited to the desired objectives." [23]

Thus, the CGIL Congress marked no significant advance toward a solution of the fundamental problem facing the PCI: how to regain the workers confidence without sacrificing its present major political objectives. In a decade, Togliatti's "great party" has become rooted in the social consciousness of wide strata of the Italian people, but it has lost its character as an instrument for achieving the hegemony of the proletariat. The resultant decline of its prestige among the workers is the inevitable forfeit which the party has had to pay for pursuing policies conditioned by its tactic of extending the social base and electoral strength of the party, and by its strategic objective of supporting the foreign policy initiatives of the USSR.

Rather than alleviating the difficult situation confronting the PCI, the doctrinal and policy shifts decided at the 20th CPSU Congress in Moscow have introduced a new disturbing factor. At first glance, Khrushchev's declarations concerning the possibility of achieving socialism by parliamentary means might be taken as complete ratification of the line persistently followed by Togliatti since 1945. This interpretation, however, is much too simplified in the light of a careful analysis of the Soviet party leader's statements.

Reduced to its essentials, the pertinent passage of Khrushchev's speech of February 14 declared that in a number of "highly-developed capitalist countries" the working class has a real opportunity to "unite the overwhelming majority of the people under its leadership" and "capture a stable majority in parliament." In the same passage, however, Khrushchev spoke of basing the conquest of parliament on "a mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat," and he further qualified his position by stating that "sharp revolutionary class struggle" will still be inevitable where the capitalist system is protected by the "military and police apparatus." [24]

This is, on the face of it, anything but a categorical pronouncement. It is questionable, first, that Italy is a "highly-developed capitalist country," though Khrushchev's specific mention elsewhere in his speech of French and Italian Communist electoral successes makes it logical to assume that he had these two countries in mind as places where the parliamentary triumph of socialism is possible. If so, they are presumably not in Khrushchev's other category of countries where control of the military and police apparatus is so strongly in the hands of the capitalist bourgeoisie that it can be wrested away only by "revolutionary class struggle." Yet many Italian Communists, disillusioned by the past failure of Togliatti's popular front tactics, are likely to see it otherwise and cite Khrushchev's declaration as supporting a more aggressive, revolutionary line for the PCI.

This latter contention finds further support in Khrushchev's reference to basing the conquest of parliament on "a mass revolutionary movement." The difference between this and Togliatti's strategy is obvious. Togliatti's is based, not on parliamentary action supported by mass struggle, but on parliamentary action which practically excludes mass struggle or reduces it to a minimum.

It was the denigration of Stalin, however, which was by far the most important development at the 20th Congress. The effect of this on Togliatti's personal position as undisputed, virtually singlehanded leader of the party may be unsettling, especially in view of the singular parallel between the rise of the two men to power and the methods of its achievement. Togliatti may be able to convince the party rank and file that everything that happened at the Moscow Congress confirms his own theses, but it will only be because he has full control of the party machine, the party press and other organs for disseminating information to party members, not because it is the objective truth. And there is reason to believe that the currents unleashed from Moscow may prove too strong for Togliatti to control.

[21] CGIL Official Press Release on 4th Congress Proceedings, p. 31.
[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 59.
[23] *L'Unità*, March 4, 1956.
[24] *Pravda*, February 15, 1956.

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Recent Studies of Communist Affairs

THE UNITED STATES

Russia Since Stalin: Old Trends and New Problems (series of 16 articles), in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January 1956.

The expert analyses of 16 specialists in Soviet affairs have been combined, under the capable editorship of Philip E. Mosely, into an excellent symposium.[1] Is the Soviet Union after Stalin more responsive to the aspirations of its own people for a better life and for peace? How can the oft-stated Soviet belief in the inevitable world-wide triumph of communism be reconciled with Moscow's recent espousal of coexistence with other political systems? Can we expect a calmer and less tension-ridden world? These broad questions are posed by Mr. Mosely in his foreword. And in an attempt to provide meaningful answers, he has organized the articles into four large sections—"Political and Social Developments," "Economic Developments and Problems," "Cultural Life," and "Soviet Role in World Politics."

In an introductory survey article Barrington Moore suggests that the Soviet need to obtain higher production and productivity is the basic reason for the relaxation of internal tension. He stresses, however, that in the context of Soviet society the relaxation of tension, which means less coercion and a more "rational" use of natural resources, men and technology, does not imply more democracy—an opinion in which John Hazard, after a painstaking review of "Governmental Developments in the USSR Since Stalin," also concurs. Mr. Hazard observes that the slight administrative decentralization which has been carried out in the interests of efficiency has been accompanied by "very little lessening of centralization in the interest of public participation in the making of decisions."

[1] The exigencies of space have prevented specific mention of the following articles: Joseph A. Kershaw, "Recent Trends in the Soviet Economy"; M. Gardner Clark, "Soviet Iron and Steel Industry: Recent Developments and Prospects"; Robert M. Slusser, "Soviet Music Since the Death of Stalin"; Paul E. Zinner, "Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe."

Merle Fainsod's article on "The Communist Party Since Stalin" indicates that the different methods used by Stalin's successors have had tangible positive results within the Soviet Union. "Whatever the motives which have inspired this activity, the result has been to project an image of personalized and humanized leadership which suggests a change from the past." Mr. Fainsod feels, however, that softer methods are not indicative of a substantial change in the party's position in Soviet society: "The supremacy of the party continues to be the alpha and the omega of Soviet rule." Nor can the habits ingrained in the present leaders by twenty years of Stalin's rule be shed easily. Although Khrushchev has not yet "attained a position of indisputable primacy," his post as First Secretary of the CPSU, and as head of the recently formed Section of Party Organs for the RSFSR, offers him many opportunities to do so.

The section on "Economic Developments and Problems" highlights the basic problem of the Soviet Union today: the chronic shortage of consumer goods and of food caused by the doctrinaire emphasis of Soviet economists on a high rate of industrial growth at the expense of consumer wants. Gregory Grossman, in an article on "Soviet Agriculture Since Stalin," indicates that farm production could be increased somewhat if a large portion of the resources and manpower now dedicated to military uses were applied in the agricultural sector. But he also feels that substantial and continuing improvement in the food situation is impossible unless monetary incentives for the peasants are vastly increased and consumer goods become generally available. Unfortunately for the Soviet people, the present order of priorities in the Soviet Union makes this unlikely; nor will there be significant imports of consumer goods.

In this connection, Oleg Hoeffding expects Soviet foreign trade "to remain the trickle that it is today." Its purpose will likewise remain unchanged: to bind the satellite economies more closely to the Soviet economy, and to woo underdeveloped areas with promises of loans and machinery. Thus the Soviet people can expect only partial amelioration of their

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economic plight unless and until the leaders of the Soviet Union abandon the dogma that in the "historical race" a Soviet "victory" depends upon the present order of priorities stressing industrialization.

Devoted to the arts and sciences, the section on "Cultural Life" indicates both hopeful signs and the limited scope of the changes occurring since Stalin's death. In the field of literature, there has been some criticism of regime-imposed restraints by Soviet writers themselves. An example is Ilya Ehrenburg's statement that a good writer does not need the "social command." ("Can one imagine," he added, "commanding Tolstoy to do *Anna Karenina* or commanding Gorky to do *Mother*?") Yet neither Ehrenburg's nor other writers' criticisms have challenged the ultimate authority of the party; and if the Soviet writer is now permitted gentle criticism of controls, still he must couple it with acceptance of authority. "Each of us writes according to the dictates of his heart," said Sholokhov at the Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, "but our hearts belong to the party. . . ." [2]

Similarly in architecture: Although there are signs that antiquated modes of expression will now give way to "a new aesthetic, an engineer's approach to building," the reason is solely a desire for economy in construction. "A study of the post-Stalin aesthetic trends does not reveal any deviations from the Marxist philosophy of art," writes Arthur Voyce.

George Kline's review of "Recent Soviet Philosophy" is even more explicit:

There is no sign at all of any slackening of the generally authoritarian and dogmatic character of Soviet philosophy and no indication, despite misleading verbal claims to the contrary, of any genuine freedom of philosophic reflection, discussion, or criticism.

The situation in Soviet science is different. Realizing that the economy and armed forces depend on modern and rational technology, Soviet leaders decided that the roadblock of Stalinist dogma had to be removed. Consequently, writes John Turkevich:

The last three years have seen a change in Soviet science, . . . the isolation of Soviet scholars is being lifted. . . . Soviet science and technology [have shown] . . . an increasing conformity with the principles of world-wide science . . . the Academy [of Sciences] does not appeal to the principles of Marxism for the development of Russian science.

This change from Stalinist authoritarianism has been combined with a tremendous increase in study and training facilities. The leaders of the Soviet Union have sought to establish that as the country moves toward more "competitive coexistence," it is assured a modern science and technology.

Although some Soviet methods have changed and the danger of a Communist-fomented war has lessened, there should be no mistaking the Soviet conception of competitive coexistence as an active process indeed. The hard core of post-Stalin diplomacy in Europe, says Robert F. Byrnes, remains unalterable opposition to the unification of Germany except under Soviet auspices. However, in an attempt to oust United States forces and destroy the organizations fostering intra-European unity, "softer, subtler, more persuasive" methods have been used. Local Communist parties have been ordered to form popular fronts with other domestic groups and infiltrate political, religious, educational, and labor organizations in an effort to destroy the unity of the Western world from within.

In Asia, too, the aims of Soviet policy remain unchanged, writes Harold H. Fisher:

The Soviet Communists . . . still hope to prevail upon the peoples of Asia to follow the Communist lead and to use Communist methods to achieve peace, progress, and equality.

Wherever possible, Soviet diplomats try to forestall the use of Western resources, technology, and capital. Soviet propaganda associates the United States' offers of aid with the exploitative imperialism of a bygone era, while Soviet policies are identified with the anti-colonialism of the Arab and Asian nations.

In his closing summary, Philip Mosely rejects the theory that the recent changes in Soviet society reflect weakness in its structure. Nor does he believe that they signify a democratic future for the Soviet people. It would be as unrealistic to read this into the recent modifications of policies as it would be unreasonable to expect the Soviet people to be unimpressed with what must be a welcome relaxation in the tension of their everyday lives. If some of the most heinous features of Soviet policies have been softened in outline, it has not been out of fear but out of a calculated desire to lessen resistance to a program which, in all essentials, remains unaltered: there are no institutions which democratize decision making, the party dispenses orthodoxy, the creative artist must pledge his heart to the party and its canons, collectivization remains the basis of agriculture, heavy industry is still stressed over the production of consumer goods, investments in military strength have increased steadily since 1953.

In like fashion, though the relaxation of the tension generated by Stalinist foreign policy is also welcome, it is essential not to confuse a slight shift in tactics with a major change in goals. Quite the contrary—

[2] Quoted in the article by Ernest J. Simmons, "Soviet Literature, 1950-1955."

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the policies of Stalin's successors reveal their calm confidence in the durability of the Soviet system and a clear determination to extend its influence should the non-Communist countries be careless enough to allow them to do so.

The Soviet Union Since Stalin (series), in *Current History*, January, 1956.

The seven articles herein under review offer a largely homogeneous and closely-reasoned evaluation of the major factors shaping the recent alterations in the facade of Soviet society. It would have been unreasonable, argues Alfred G. Meyer in his introductory survey article, to have expected that Stalinism as such could have survived the death of its creator; but it would be equally foolhardy, he continues, to look for significant changes in Soviet goals, no matter how skillful the alterations in tactics. He singles out four forces which have shaped the Russian revolution and which continue to operate in the Soviet Union today:

. . . (1) an urge toward totalitarian dictatorship and control; (2) an urge toward rational management; (3) an urge toward the formation of vested interests and their crystallization in a new class structure; and (4) an urge toward socialism and democracy.

What has happened since Stalin's death, says Mr. Meyer, is that the first of these "urges" has been restrained by the counter-pressures exerted by the others:

The present phase seems to be . . . a fight *against* power . . . a striving for a society in which the talented rise and the competent rule . . . without the disturbances created by politics.

The author suggests, however, that this desire will be frustrated—already, less than three years after Stalin's death, the party has reasserted its control and is again defining the ideological criteria by which talent and competence will be judged. In his article "Soviet Society Today" Kent Geiger corroborates the view that the Communist Party is still firmly in control of Soviet society. The entire process of change in post-Stalin society has been carefully directed, he says, "through the mechanism of centralized planning, and tends to have a forced rather than spontaneous quality."

Kruschchev's campaign to develop the virgin lands as a major corn-producing area is a case example of continued forced and irrational planning. Lazar Volin's discussion of "Soviet Agriculture and the New Look" indicates that it will be many years at best before this program can be successful, while the cost in money, materials, and manpower can hardly be reckoned. Greater incentives may help agriculture as a whole, especially if coupled with a significant increase in consumer goods, but Mr. Volin does not expect agricultural production to rise commensurately with the demands of a steadily increasing population.

In his short article on "Soviet Industry and the New Look" Michael Florinsky indicates that although "the outlook for Soviet industry—barring the outbreak of a new major war—is not unpromising," production of consumer goods will increase only slowly because recent Soviet industrial policies "conform closely to Communist orthodoxy" in emphasizing the development of heavy industry. He points out, however, that while Soviet economic advance in itself poses no intrinsic threat, the non-Communist world must remain watchful: for "a true reconciliation" between Communist and non-Communist countries "is precluded so long as the Moscow government remains faithful to Communist theology."

Frederick Schuman and Wayne Vucinich, though their two articles agree on the unlikelihood of war, differ in their interpretation of the essence of "peaceful coexistence." Mr. Schuman sees it as a long period of ideological rivalry and "competition in economic, moral and spiritual emulation in meeting the universal aspirations of mankind." Mr. Vucinich, on the other hand, sees the new Soviet diplomacy as a much more active process, as a clever tactic necessitated by the fear of an atomic war. Far from being calculated to satisfy "the universal aspirations of mankind," the continuing Soviet drive toward the Middle, South and Far East will merely strive to substitute economic domination for military conquest. "Imperialism has not ceased to be an essential tenet of Soviet communism," he concludes.

N. S. Timasheff's article on "Soviet Education's New Look" reveals the core of the Soviet system to be highly centralized and regimented in spirit and content. In defining the goal of Soviet educational methods, he writes:

The dream of "new men" enthusiastically acting in the spirit of communism is a thing of the past. Men trained to obey unquestioningly form a much more solid foundation for a totalitarian despotism.

Far from presenting a picture of a dynamic society evolving in the direction of more democracy, these articles paint Soviet society as essentially stratified in structure and conservative in policy. Change in Soviet society has been more verbal than real, and when real—controlled. The seemingly basic changes occurring since Stalin's death in March 1953 are thus not so much progressive moves auguring democracy for the Soviet people as comparatively minor adjustments of the excessively rigid structure of Stalinist society.

R. B.

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Correspondence

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SOVIET JUSTICE AFTER STALIN

In his article "New Trend in Soviet Justice?" (issue No. 1, 1956), Mr. Vladimir Gsovski devotes a great deal of attention to the "Special Board" of the Soviet Ministry of Interior, which "officially has the power to incarcerate any person or persons the regime deems 'socially dangerous' for a period up to five years" without a trial and without the legal guarantees offered to political offenders in non-totalitarian countries. Contrary to various unofficial reports, states the author, the "Special Board" continues to exist, "even if the regime is not making use of it at the moment." He points to the persistence of this institution as an important indication that there have been no basic changes in the Soviet concept of legal justice.

Without disputing some of the author's other assertions (all of which are well argued and substantiated), let me point out that he is wrong insofar as the "Special Board" is concerned. The proof is contained in the January 1956 issue of the authoritative *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo* (Soviet Government and Law) which states unequivocally that the "Special Board" was abolished in 1953. Although the journal does not elaborate, there seems to be no reason to assume that it represents anything but the truth. Is it not possible, therefore, to assume that the Soviet Government is making a genuine effort to remove the most odious features of its legal system (instituted under Stalin), and is slowly moving toward a concept of justice more consonant with those cherished by democratic societies?

Toronto, Canada — Robert Gilman

Mr. Gsovski replies: The article "New Trend in Soviet Justice?" was written and printed before issue No. 1, 1956 of the Soviet legal periodical *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo* reached this country. Two sentences of an editorial in the issue constituted the only statement yet published in the Soviet press to the effect that the Special Board under the Ministry of the Interior has been abolished. The sentences read:

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government have recently been carrying out serious measures directed towards further fortification of socialist legality and protection of rights and legitimate interests of citizens. In this connection, as early as 1953 the Special Board attached to the USSR Ministry of the Interior was abolished with the transfer of criminal cases of all categories . . . [to] organs of the general judicial system.

The question still remains whether this brief statement is enough to show that the imposition of heavy penalties, especially confinement in camps of correctional labor by administrative action, was discontinued. Heavy penalties have been imposed by administrative action without trial ever since the inception of the Soviet regime. The Cheka or Vecheka of early days was superseded by the GPU. This, in turn, became the OGPU which was transformed, in 1934, into the People's Commissariat for the Interior (NKVD) which was renamed, in 1946, the Ministry of the Interior (MVD). The powers of this Ministry and the Special Board under it were for the last time legally defined by several acts of 1934 and especially that of September 5, 1934 (printed in the Collection of Laws and Decrees for 1935, item 84). These acts were passed by the Central Executive Committee, a legislative body of that time; as laws they would be subject to change only by an act of the Supreme Soviet, which alone enacts law under the present Constitution. The resolutions of the Supreme Soviet and its Presidium are published in a special periodical, *Vedomosti* which is currently received in this country. No act supporting the above quotation was ever printed there, or in any other publication containing laws.

The Act of September 5, 1934, reads in part:

1) The People's Commissariat for [now Ministry of] the Interior shall have the right to apply to persons considered socially dangerous the following:

- **(a) Exile for a period up to five years to [certain] places, the list of which shall be established by the USSR Commissariat for the Interior . . . [the exiled] persons are to be under open surveillance;**
- **(b) Expulsion for a period up to five years, [with offenders] under open surveillance and prohibited from residing in capitals, large cities and industrial centers of the USSR;**
- **(c) Confinement in camps of correctional labor up to five years;**
- **(d) Expulsion from the confines of the USSR of aliens who are socially dangerous.**

2) For the application of measures mentioned in Section 1 a Special Board shall be established under the People's Commissar for the Interior under his chairmanship . . .

From this wording of the Act of September 5, 1934, it is clear that the broad powers specified in Section 1 were granted directly to the Ministry of the Interior; while the Special Board was created merely as the instrumentality for the exercise of these powers. The passage in *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo* mentions only the abolition of the Special Board; it does not state that the powers granted to the Ministry to impose exile and confinement are also abolished. It is logical to assume that Section 1 remains in effect, that the powers of the Ministry may be exercised by the Minister himself, or that the jurisdiction of the Special Board may have been transferred to the Committee on State Security. The devious and, to say the least, indirect way in which the abolition of the Special Board was announced is proof positive that, if some of "the most odious features" of Stalinism have been removed, the Soviet leaders still have the power to deal swiftly with "socially dangerous" opponents without being bound by the "cumbersome" delays of legal procedure.

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